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Title of Thesis – Titre de la thèse

"LANGUAGE AND CHARACTER IN JANE AUSTEN'S APPRENTICE WORKS: 1787-1794"

Degree for which thesis was presented
Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée

M.A.

Year this degree conferred
Année d'obtention de ce grade

1985

University – Université

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Name of Supervisor – Nom du directeur de thèse

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Language and Character in Jane Austen's Apprentice Works: 1787 - 1794

by

(C) Janz Ann Chuan Lim

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

Department of English

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Fall 1985

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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For my parents.

Abstract

In her major works, Jane Austen often uses a character's language as a means of revealing his or her personality. This technique of characterisation is found, in various stages of development, in her apprentice work written between 1787-94. A study of "Frederic & Elfrida" (1787) through *Lady Susan* (1793-4) reveals the author's increasing skill in manipulating a personage's speech and written language for the purposes of character revelation. Jane Austen's juvenilia date from the time she was eleven or twelve; at nineteen or twenty, in *Lady Susan*, she had already mastered the technique of characterisation through a character's language.

Acknowledgements

In acknowledgement, I would like to thank Juliet McMaster for supervising my work on this thesis; Robert Merrett for his time and helpful comments; Linda Woodbridge, Eu Soon Ming, and Brunhild Baumgardt for their encouragement and support; and David Couture for his help at the computer. To my parents, I owe a special kind of debt and thanks for their love and understanding.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 1

Chapter 1: Shorter Pieces 3

Chapter 2: "Love and Freindship" 41

Chapter 3: "Catharine or the Bower" 53

Chapter 4: *Lady Susan* 66

Conclusion 78

Notes 80

Bibliography 83

Introduction

Many critics of Jane Austen's novels will agree that the author's major strength lies in the drawing of realistic personages. [1] Thomas Henry Lister talks about Jane Austen's "art of making her readers intimately acquainted with the character of all whom she describes." [2] For my purposes, the key word here is "describes;" yet a quick check through the pages of narrative in any Jane Austen novel will reveal figures who are but lightly described. How, then, does the author make these personages -- whom Lister claims she "describes" -- work for the reader? The answer lies in the interaction which exists between these characters. In *Jane Austen's Novels: The Fabric of Dialogue*, Howard S. Babb remarks that Jane Austen's world records minimal physical action. In such an environment, interaction is of the utmost importance. Through interaction, characters come alive -- they become energized and continue to live afterward in the memory of the reader. I suggest that Lister had the concept of interaction in mind when he spoke about the description of personages in Jane Austen's novels: "She scarcely does more than make them act and talk, and we know them directly," [3] he said. Interaction between individuals reveals characters; and, where interaction illuminates, it serves as a form of description.

Jane Austen's apprentice work reveals her many experiments with characterization. One of these is her use of interaction through language as a means of character creation, development and revelation. By language, I refer to that which is both spoken and written, as used by the personages themselves for the purposes of self-expression and communication. Such language very often elucidates the character of the speaker and/or writer, revealing perhaps what he or she had meant to conceal from another personage and/or reader. The following text will deal with Jane Austen's uses of an individual's chosen language as a means of character revelation. In keeping with my treatment of Jane Austen's work between 1787 and 1794 as apprentice work, I shall be dealing with her pieces of early writing in chronological

order. I have used the dates given in R. W. Chapman's edition of the *Minor Works*, with revisions made by B. C. Southam in 1969. In chapter one, I will look at her experiments with characterization through language in "Frederic & Elfrida," "Jack & Alice," "A Collection of Letters," "Lesley Castle" and "The Three Sisters." Chapters two, three and four will concentrate on character revelation -- again through a personage's chosen language -- in "Love and Freindship," "Catharine or the Bower," and *Lady Susan* respectively. In the course of this discussion, I hope to demonstrate that Jane Austen's technique of character illumination improves with each successive apprentice work -- to the point whereby one can say with Babb that "Jane Austen's dialogue . . . reveals her characters in depth and shows them engaged in the most fundamental activities of personality."[4]

Chapter 1: Shorter Pieces

Jane Austen began her writing career in 1787 (when she was eleven or twelve) or even earlier. J. E. Austen-Leigh notes in *A Memoir of Jane Austen* that "it is impossible to say at how early an age she began to write." [1] Three manuscript notebooks comprising what are believed to be her earliest compositions have survived. These notebooks are entitled *Volume the First*, *Volume the Second* and *Volume the Third*. They contain pieces of work written between 1787 and 1793.

Jane Austen has been praised again and again for her skilful use of dialogue as a means of characterization. According to Archbishop Richard Whately, who was writing as early as 1821, Jane Austen conducted her dialogue "with a regard to character hardly exceeded even by Shakespeare himself." [2] In her own day, writes her biographer J. E. Austen-Leigh, her characters were thought to be "so life-like that it was assumed that they must once have lived, and have been transferred bodily, as it were, into her pages." [3] Jane Austen early realized the importance of dialogue as a tool for character creation and development: in her juvenilia, the personages' speeches often reveal their personalities. In this chapter, I shall look at some of the shorter pieces of work comprising Jane Austen's juvenilia; these are "Frederic & Elfrida," "Jack & Alice," "A Collection of Letters," "Lesley Castle" and "The Three Sisters." I have chosen these stories for discussion for two reasons: first, they are representative of the author's early work; second, they reflect her handling of an individual's language for the purposes of character elucidation. Because much of the communication between her characters exists not only through conversation but through letters as well, my subject will be her use of language as used by the characters themselves as a means of character revelation.

"Frederic & Elfrida"

Written in 1787, "Frederic & Elfrida" burlesques the sentimental romance by concentrating on the story of the anti-heroine, Rebecca, rather than on that of the protagonists, Frederic and Elfrida. "Frederic & Elfrida" opens with descriptions of Frederic and Elfrida and their friend, Charlotte. The reader is introduced to their acquaintance, Rebecca Fitzroy, in chapter two of this short tale. "Frederic & Elfrida" consists of three strands of plot which tell the stories of Frederic and Elfrida, Charlotte, and Rebecca. It records the protagonists' eventual marriage to each other after an abnormally long engagement; Charlotte's suicide on realizing her folly in engaging herself to two men almost simultaneously, and Rebecca's marriage to Captain Roger after overcoming her mother's objections to their union. Rebecca may properly be called the main figure in this tale since much of it deals with her character. Her importance is reflected in the spoken language contained in the tale: the two main speeches in "Frederic & Elfrida" are both concerned with her character. The first of these speeches describes her person, whilst the second deals with the problem she encounters with regard to her marital plans.

A character's language plays an important role in "Frederic & Elfrida": not only does it indicate the significance or insignificance of each figure in the story; it also helps to reveal his or her personality. Jane Austen, here, underscores the insignificance of her protagonists by giving them very few unshared words of their own: Frederic is given one line of speech, whilst Elfrida is allowed one frivolous letter, and no speeches which she may call her very own. The literary import of Jane Austen's hero and heroine is further diminished by the author's successful use of choral speech: not only are Frederic and Elfrida given extremely few words of their own, but when they (together) do speak at length, they must share their speeches with at least one or more characters. (Frederic and Elfrida's speech on Rebecca's physical and mental attributes is shared with Charlotte; their ultimatum to Mrs. Fitzroy is shared with Rebecca and Captain Roger.) Like Frederic's oath and Elfrida's letter, these speeches reveal the

protagonists' unheroic qualities. For instance, their speech on Rebecca's attributes exposes their frivolously shallow natures and their lack of true perception when they justify their high opinion of Rebecca's mind by talking of her excellent taste in preferring Indian muslin over English cloth. Frederic's and Elfrida's ultimatum to Mrs. Fitzroy, with regard to Rebecca's marital plans, confirms their lowly characters. For the farcical nature of their murder threat does not automatically mean that it is to be taken lightly: Jane Austen is clearly using gross understatement to underscore the characters' blatant breach of social law and order when she calls it a "gentle & sweet persuasion." [4] The ultimatum to Mrs. Fitzroy is interesting both as an indication of the protagonists' characters and as an example of Jane Austen's use of graphic speech.

> "Consent then Madam to [the union of Rebecca and Captain Roger] . . . & as a reward, this smelling Bottle which I enclose in my right hand, shall be yours & yours forever; I never will claim it again. But if you refuse to join their hands in 3 days time, this dagger which I enclose in my left shall be steeped in your hearts blood."
> "Speak then Madam & decide their fate & yours." (10)

Here one sees how Jane Austen uses speech as a means of describing some of the action contained within the story. Southam mentions in *Jane Austen's Literary Manuscripts* that the author's early works were often acted out [5] and this fact may account for the dramatic quality of the speech. Such a vivid depiction of action through speech enables the reader to see the movements of the characters in the mind's eye, thereby impressing upon the reader's mind the immediacy and "reality" of the situation. This, in turn, affirms the ignoble and unheroic natures of the speakers. Thus, while Frederic and Elfrida are allowed to speak at length only as part of a chorus, what they do say reveals them as lowly imitations of conventional sentimental heroes and heroines.

The story of Charlotte Drummond and her ultimate death constitutes another strand of plot in "Frederic & Elfrida." Charlotte is portrayed as a lovely girl "whose character was a willingness to oblige every one" (4). In "Chapter the Third" (7-9), she humours Rebecca because she has picked up the underlying signals in the latter's speech: "'I have lately taken it into my head to think (perhaps with little reason) that my complexion is by no means equal to

the rest of my face & have therefore taken, as you see, to white & red paint which I would scorn to use on any other occasion as I hate art'" (7). The author writes that "Charlotte, who perfectly understood the meaning of her freind's speech, was too good-temper'd & obliging to refuse her, what she knew she wished,--a compliment" (7). What Charlotte understands, then, is that in Rebecca's negative talk about her complexion, she is, in effect, hinting for a refutation of her own opinion of it. This is an instance of Jane Austen's early recognition of and play with the various layers of meaning in a speech, which may signify more than its explicit meaning. Here, too, is an example of Charlotte's warm and "good-temper'd" nature --one which dictates that she does not refuse Rebecca "what she knew she wished,--a compliment" (7) on her friend's complexion. Thus the joke on Charlotte's participation (along with Frederic and Elfrida) in the speech describing Rebecca's physical and mental attributes is more than a play on a choral speech obliging Charlotte to speak what she would not normally say; it is also a comment on her incapacity to discriminate intelligently between common sense action and "an earnest desire to oblige every one" (8). This inability to choose wisely between "the natural turn of her mind to make every one happy" (8) and socially responsible behaviour constitutes a mortal handicap for Charlotte for it leads to her eventual suicide. The reader is told that Charlotte, "not being able to resolve to make any one [suitor] miserable . . . consented to become [their] . . . Wife the next morning" (8); but when she "recollected the double engagement she had entered into . . . the reflection of her past folly, operated so strongly on her mind, that she resolved to be guilty of a greater, & to that end threw herself into a deep stream which ran thro' her Aunt's pleasure Grounds in Portland Place" (9). Charlotte Drummond is obviously not an important personage in "Frederic & Elfrida;" this is implied in Jane Austen's quick and easy disposal of her. The insignificance of Charlotte's character is also reflected in Rebecca's preoccupation with her own complexion rather than with Charlotte's imminent departure when Charlotte comes to take leave of her friend (7).

Rebecca Fitzroy is the most important character in "Frederic & Elfrida." Although she is only introduced in the second chapter of the tale and hardly speaks, much of the dialogue in

"Frederic & Elfrida" deals with her character. As an anti-heroine, Rebecca's character is an incongruous imitation of the sentimental protagonist's; the only similarity she bears to the heroine in distress is the opposition she faces concerning her marital plans with her lover. For Rebecca is thirty-six and ugly; physically, then, she is the antithesis of the conventional heroine. Nor is her thinking profound; it is only equal to that of Jane Austen's lowly protagonists and the undiscriminating Charlotte.

In "Frederic & Elfrida," the protagonists and their "intimate freind" (4), Charlotte, are described by the narrator. Rebecca's person, however, is described by means of dialogue:

> "Lovely & too charming Fair one, notwithstanding your forbidding Squint, your greazy tresses & your swelling Back, which are more frightfull than imagination can paint or pen describe, I cannot refrain from expressing my raptures, at the engaging Qualities of your Mind, which so amply atone for the Horror, with which your first appearance must ever inspire the unwary visitor."
>
> "Your sentiments so nobly expressed on the different excellencies of Indian & English Muslins, & the judicious preference you give the former, have excited in me an admiration of which I can alone give an adequate idea, by assuring you it is nearly equal to what I feel for myself." (6)

Here Frederic, Elfrida and Charlotte consistently negate the praises they bestow on Rebecca; this has the effect of deflating the latter's character and emphasizing her anti-heroic nature. Thus, instead of the truly "'Lovely & too charming Fair one'" of sentimental romance, one is treated to the sight of Rebecca's "'greazy tresses & . . . swelling Back'" (6); and in place of virtue moralising on the ups and downs of life, one is given vanity judiciously selecting Indian muslin over English cloth. In the speech cited above, one notices that it is punctuated with many adjectives and phrases expressing individual opinions concerning Rebecca's physical and mental attributes. It is the personal tone and quality of this speech that function as impressionistic building blocks with regard to Rebecca's character. These opinions impart to the subject's person a greater feel of solidity and, hence, "reality." This, in turn, gives one a better grasp on Rebecca's character -- an understanding that will make her, more than any of the other characters, stand out in one's mind.

Rebecca represents one of Jane Austen's earliest experiments with consistent characterisation. As the author's best developed personage in "Frederic & Elfrida," Rebecca is

a creation with a fetish of her own: she is obsessed with her looks or lack thereof. Thus, when one next sees Rebecca, she is "found surrounded by [the] Patches, Powder, Pomatum & Paint with which she was vainly endeavouring to remedy the natural plainness of her face" (7). Rebecca's speech, at this juncture, is also entirely devoted to the subject of her face: "'I have lately taken it into my head to think (perhaps with little reason) that my complexion is by no means equal to the rest of my face & have therefore taken . . . to white & red paint which I would scorn to use on any other occasion as I hate art'" (7). Here the author ties together the words "head," "think," and "reason" in an ironic comment to show the reader that Rebecca is far from using her head to think with reason; if she did, she would not be so unnecessarily preoccupied with "the natural plainness of her face" (7). Vanity makes Rebecca hypocritical, and embarrassment prompts her lie; but all this is consistent with her personality and her role as an anti-heroine. Even the song she chooses to sing deals with ornament and physical beauty, thereby exposing her shallowness of character:

> When Corydon went to the fair
> He bought a red ribbon for Bess,
> With which she encircled her hair
> & made herself look very fess. (10)

Jane Austen's handling of Rebecca Fitzroy's character is proof of her interest in using dialogue as a means of characterisation. Perhaps it is not insignificant that she should choose to practise her budding powers of characterisation through dialogue on an anti-heroine; for Jane Austen was interested in portraying, accurately, the natural protagonist of daily life, and not the unnatural heroine of literary fantasy.

"Jack & Alice"

Written between 1787 and 1790, "Jack & Alice" concentrates on the story of the heroine, Alice, and her friends, Lady Williams, Lucy and Charles. (Jack does not even appear in the tale; he is casually dismissed by the author as one whose "unfortunate propensity to Liquor . . . so compleatly deprived him of the use of those faculties Nature had endowed him

with, that he never did anything worth mentioning" (25). During the course of this mini novel, the reader is told that both Alice and Lucy are passionately in love with Charles; however, he eventually marries their confidante, Lady Williams, instead. "Jack & Alice" also records the deaths of two of its characters (aside from Jack's). While on a visit to Bath, Lucy is killed and her murderer is "speedily raised to the Gallows" (29).

"Jack & Alice" opens with descriptions of many of the characters in the tale. But because the narrator often speaks tongue in cheek, one cannot believe everything she says here. A reading of the characters' language, however, will prove extremely useful in helping one to distinguish between what is true and what is not in the narrator's introductory comments on these personages. Hence, one learns that whilst Alice is accurately portrayed, Lady Williams and Charles are not. As for Lucy (another major character in "Jack & Alice"), she is not described in the introductory comments for she appears in the tale only some time after it has begun. Instead her personality is revealed solely through the language she uses.

Alice Johnson's character is a burlesque of the sentimental heroine's. Jane Austen's heroine "turned" anti-heroine is far from possessing the stately deportment of virtue in distress; instead disappointments lead her directly "to her Bottle & [all is] . . . soon forgot" (26). Alice is first introduced to the reader as one of the "3 Dominos (each with a bottle in their hand)" (14) at a masquerade party. This depiction of her as an alcoholic is carried through throughout "Jack & Alice": her love for and dependence on the bottle is constantly referred to in the tale; indeed she makes all her speeches while in an intoxicated state. Alice's addiction to drink and intoxication is made perfectly clear in Lady Williams' "'She has many rare & charming qualities, but Sobriety is not one of them'" (23). In the passage quoted below, Alice's angry responses to Lady Williams' description of Mrs. Watkins imply her drunken state and reveal her guilty awareness of it.

> "Mrs Watkins was . . . in general esteemed a pretty Woman, but I never thought her very handsome, for my part. She had too high a forehead, Her eyes were too small & she had too much colour." [said Lady Williams].
>
> "How can *that* be?" interrupted Miss Johnson reddening with anger; "Do you think that any one can have too much colour?"

"Indeed I do, & I'll tell you why I do my dear Alice; when a person has too great a degree of red in their Complexion, it gives their face in my opinion, too red a look."

"But can a face my Lady have too red a look?"

"Certainly my dear Miss Johnson & I'll [tell] you why. When a face has too red a look it does not appear to so much advantage as it would were it paler."

"Pray Ma'am proceed in your story."

"Well, as I said before, I was invited by this Lady to spend some weeks with her in town. Many Gentlemen thought her Handsome but in my opinion, Her forehead was too high, her eyes too small & she had too much colour."

"In that Madam as I said before your Ladyship must have been mistaken. Mrs. Watkins could not have too much colour since no one can have too much."

"Excuse me my Love if I do not agree with you in that particular. Let me explain myself clearly; my idea of the case is this.When a Woman has too great a proportion of red in her Cheeks, she must have too much colour."

"But Madam I deny that it is possible for any one to have too great a proportion of red in their Cheeks."

"What my Love not if they have too much colour?"

.....

The Dispute at length grew so hot on the part of Alice that, "From Words she almost came to Blows" (17-8)

Lady Williams' comment on Mrs. Watkins' red complexion is probably a reference to the latter's unsparing use of rouge on her face. But red is also the colour of inebriation -- hence Alice's heated reaction to Lady Williams' mention of Mrs. Watkins' "'too red'" (17) looks. Alice's show of temper and her near explosion into a spat of violent action have the effect of making the argument "come alive" for the reader. Unfortunately, her unladylike behaviour also raises one's disrespect for her. Alice's anti-heroic stature, then, is due to her unfeminine propensities for drink and game -- especially drink. Her vulgarity is a burlesque take-off on the sentimental heroine's femininity. This exchange between Lady Williams and Alice is also important as a wonderful piece of farce showing the author's early ability to exploit conversation for comic effect. The repeated joke concerning Alice's reaction to Lady William's description of Mrs. Watkins' complexion becomes funnier each time. The reader can almost visualize Alice becoming more and more irritated each time Lady Williams mentions the possibility of having a too ruddy colouring. Obviously this dialogue between the two women is going no where; and certainly their argument will never be resolved (19-20). Lady Williams' narration of the story of her life, then, has come to a standstill with this circuitous, though lively, exchange between her and Alice -- and this may be considered one of Jane Austen's

ways of poking fun at the sentimental convention of telling life stories. The comic effect of burlesque regarding this standard device of romance is further compounded by the fact that the conversation between the two characters involved centres, not on the precarious nature of some escapade, but rather, on the trivial issue of an individual's redness of complexion. Jane Austen's developing skill with dialogue is also evident in her introduction of and play with the different levels of meaning. Lady Williams' constant uses of such endearments as "'my dear Alice,'" "'my dear Miss Johnson'" (17) and "'my Love'" (18) are displays of her "affection" for Alice; yet, as the reader can see, she is deliberately exasperating the latter by her insistence on the redness of Mrs. Watkins' face. Thus, by manipulating the characters' dialogue and combining that with authorial descriptions of them, Jane Austen has vividly captured the sensations of the two speakers as they present their contrasting opinions on the possibility of having a red face.

Alice's friend, Lucy, is as vulgar as she is, but in a different way. Alice drinks and gambles, and even sends her father to Charles to propose on her behalf; Lucy, on the other hand, displays her social deficiencies in her active pursuit of Charles. Lucy's background and character are solely revealed through her dialogue and her letter to Lady Williams. Her introductory words are especially descriptive of her person, and the reader is given a detailed precis of her "'Life & adventures'" (20):

> "I am a native of North Wales & my Father is one of the most capital Taylors in it. Having a numerous family, he was easily prevailed on by a sister of my Mother's who is a widow in good circumstances & keeps an alehouse . . . to let her take me & breed me up at her own expence. . . . she provided me with some of the first rate Masters, who taught me all the accomplishments requisite for one of my sex and rank. Under their instructions I learned Dancing, Music, Drawing & various Languages, by which means I became more accomplished than any other Taylor's Daughter in Wales. Never was there a happier creature than I was, till within the last half year-- . . ."
>
> .....
>
> "[When] I first saw [Charles Adams] . . . I could not resist his attractions;"---
>
> .....
>
> "My aunt being in terms of the greatest intimacy with his cook, determined, at my request, to try whether she could discover, by means of her freind if there were any chance of his returning my affection. For this purpose she went . . . to drink tea with Mrs Susan, who . . . owned, that she did not think her Master would ever marry, 'for (said she) he has often & often declared to me that his wife, whoever she might be, must possess, Youth, Beauty, Birth, Wit, Merit, & Money. . . . & he continues as firm in his determination as ever.' You may imagine . . . my distress on hearing this;

> for I was fearfull that tho' possessed of Youth, Beauty, Wit & Merit, & tho' the probable Heiress of my Aunts House & business, he might think me deficient in Rank, & in being so, unworthy of his hand."
>
> "However I was determined to make a bold push & therefore wrote him a very kind letter, offering him with great tenderness my hand & heart. To this I received an angry and peremptory refusal, . . . I pressed him again on the subject. But he never answered any more of my Letters & very soon afterwards left the Country. As soon as I heard of his departure I wrote to him here, informing him that I should shortly do myself the honour of waiting on him . . . I received no answer; therefore choosing to take, Silence for Consent, I left Wales . . . & arrived here . . . this Morning." (20-2)

Lucy's painful awareness of her want of rank and breeding is indicated early in her speech. Her sense of inferiority makes her boast: hence her father is not just a "'Taylor,'" but "'one of the most capital Taylors'" (20); and she herself is not simply *brought up* by her aunt, but *bred up* "'at her [aunt's] own expence'" (20). Of course there is an element of dramatic irony in Lucy's speech -- and this is made especially apparent in her detailing of her education and accomplishments. The frame of Lucy's speech is akin to that a conventional heroine might use to describe her own life and adventures. Lucy's use of the superlative in her description of her education and training is an indicator of her unconscious wish to join the ranks of the aristocratic protagonist. Unfortunately, Lucy's low connections and her "'bold push'" (21) for Charles' hand in marriage affirm, instead, her lack of breeding. Her letter to Lady Williams (26-27) also offers another confirmation of her low origins. Her down-to-earth reasons for marrying the duke reveal an unsentimental attitude toward life: "'There are a thousand advantages to be derived from a marriage with the Duke, for besides those more inferior ones of Rank & Fortune it will procure me a home, which of all other things is what I most desire'" (27). Lucy's words -- both in her dialogue and letter -- then simultaneously betray her unconscious pretensions to heroic stature despite her realistic attitude toward life.

"Jack & Alice" is a study in the art of pretence; this is clearly signified in the ambitious Caroline Simpson's words: "'I wish I was really what I pretend to be'" (14). Jane Austen's theme of pretence is best exemplified in the person of Lady Williams. Lady Williams is first introduced to the reader as a widow in whom "every virtue met" (13); she is the "female in the character of Virtue" who flees "with hasty footsteps from the shocking scene" of "a Gaming Table where sat 3 Dominos (each with a bottle in their hand) deeply engaged" (14). But Lady

Williams' facade as a virtuous character is slowly eroded away; her speeches and her letter reveal the kind of person she really is.

Lady Williams' story of her "'Life & Adventures'" (16) sounds very similar to that of the sentimental protagonist's -- with one exception. In the speech cited below, one sees that Lady Williams' morals are tainted because of the uncertain virtue she had been tutored in:

> "My Father was a gentleman of considerable Fortune. . . . I was but six years old when I had the misfortune of losing my Mother & being at that time young & Tender, my father instead of sending me to School, procured an able handed Governess to superintend my Education at Home. . . .
>
> Miss Dickins was an excellent Governess. She instructed me in the Paths of Virtue; under her tuition I daily became more amiable, & might perhaps by this time have nearly attained perfection, had not my worthy Preceptoress. . . . eloped with the Butler. . . ." (16-17)

Like the socially irresponsible Miss Dickins who absconds from her duty to her young charge, Lady Williams poses as the intimate friend and counsellor of the love-lorn Alice and then hypocritically marries the object of the latter's affections. It is interesting to note, at this point, that Lady Williams' account of her life and adventures is vastly different in tone and content from Lucy's speech on the same topic. Unlike Lucy, who is constantly qualifying herself in her description of her background and upbringing, Lady Williams simply gives the bare facts of her life. The reader will notice that the latter delivers her story in a confident and self-assured manner, seeing no need to elaborate on her father's fortune or on the education and training she had received requisite for one of her sex and rank. This is more than likely due to the fact that she had been born into a family of good social standing and, hence, did not and does not need to justify her own social status.

Lady Williams' participation in the game of pretence is seen in her distinctive speech pattern. In the passages quoted below, one sees how she alternately negates and endorses all she says:

> "But why my dearest Lucy, why will you not at once decide this affair by returning to me & never leaving me again? . . . It will to be sure be a great expence to me, to have you always with me--I shall not be able to support it--but what is that in comparison with the happiness I shall enjoy in your society?--'twill ruin me I know--you will not therefore surely, withstand these arguments, or refuse to return to yours most affectionately. . . . [Lady Williams]" (27-8)

> "Lucy, said Lady Williams, is quite at her own disposal & if she chooses to [go to Bath] . . . I hope she will not hesitate, from any motives of delicacy on my account. I know not indeed how I shall ever be able to part with her. She never was at Bath & I should think that it would be a most agreable Jaunt to her. . . . continued she, turning to Lucy, what say you to accompanying these Ladies? I shall be miserable without you--t'will be a most pleasant tour to you--I hope you'll go; if you do I am sure t'will be the Death of me--pray be persuaded"---- (24)

In her letter to Lucy, Lady Williams first asks Lucy to return to her and then quickly tells Lucy that it would be too great a burden for her to support her young friend. Her mention of future financial difficulties with regard to Lucy's living with her signifies a reluctance on her part to take Lucy in. Lady Williams' propensity for negating what she has already said is also found in the speech quoted above. In it, she urges Lucy to go to Bath but tells the young girl that "'t'will be the death of me'" (24); this indicates that she really wants Lucy at Pammydiddle, not Bath. Lady Williams' letter and speech, then, show her striving to appear generous and kind, although her self-serving nature keeps coming through; thus, in both instances, she ends her rattling on a selfishly discouraging note. Lady Williams' style of writing and speaking reflects the theme of "Jack & Alice" -- that is, pretence -- and her "virtuous" personality. In the following citation, one again sees Lady Williams' propensity for elaborately evolving a virtuous argument, while almost simultaneously cancelling it out:

> "When you are more intimately acquainted with my Alice you will not be surprised, Lucy, to see the dear Creature drink a little too much; for such things happen every day. She has many rare & charming qualities, but Sobriety is not one of them. The whole Family are indeed a sad drunken set. I am sorry to say too that I never knew three such thorough Gamesters as they are, more particularly Alice. But she is a charming girl. I fancy not one of the sweetest tempers in the world; to be sure I have seen her in such passions! However she is a sweet young Woman. I am sure you'll like her. I scarcely know any one so amiable.--Oh! that you could but have seen her the other Evening! How she raved! & on such a trifle too! She is indeed a most pleasing Girl! I shall always love her!" (23)

Here Lady Williams' pattern of speech reveals her pretence of a non-existent regard for Alice. That she is out to discredit Alice's reputation is heard in her casual generalisations (which do not really say anything) about Alice's good nature, and confirmed in her detailed expositions on Alice's bad points. One's suspicion that she is really far from being "Candid . . . & sincere" (13) is verified by her following words: "'I am very partial to [Alice] . . . and perhaps am

blinded by my affection, to her real defects'" (23). Lady Williams' socially inappropriate conduct is founded on a self-centredness which is clearly seen in her communications with all the characters in the story: she never fails to present her point of view, and she always ends her conversation, speech or letter by harking back to it. She is, thus, the perfect mate for the equally egotistical Charles Adams whom she eventually marries.

Charles Adams is Jane Austen's replacement for Jack Johnson. As a man who prides himself on his perfection, Charles seems to be the exact opposite to the author's drunken, and now dead hero, Jack. Like Jack, however, Charles is but a satirical version of the sentimental protagonist. Thus, while Jack is presented as a burlesque version of the moralising protagonist whose exploits, rather than personality, made him an interesting figure, his substitute, Charles, comes across as a self-conceited prig who parodies the perfect hero by looking upon himself as the heroic ideal, without realising that he actually is not:

> "I look upon myself to be . . . a perfect Beauty--where would you see a finer figure or a more charming face. . . . I imagine my Manners & Address to be of the most polished kind; there is a certain elegance a peculiar sweetness in them that I never saw equalled & cannot describe--. Partiality aside, I am certainly more accomplished in every Language, every Science, every Art and every thing than any other person in Europe. My temper is even, my virtues innumerable, my self unparalelled." (25)

Charles' conceited enumeration of his good qualities and his ridiculous boasts reveal his self-deception in his estimation of his "'innumerable virtues'" (25). Charles sees the obvious but not the hidden characteristics of other people (and himself); he marries Lady Williams despite his statement that "'I expect nothing more in my wife than my wife will find in me--Perfection'" (26). Though he can tell that Mr. Johnson is "'a drunken old Dog'" (25), he cannot sense that Lady Williams is a selfish hypocrite.

Like Lady Williams, Charles seems to be what he is not. When he first appears (at a masquerade) in "a Mask representing the Sun" (13), one expects him to be a source of light and, hence, enlightenment. However, one's hopes are ultimately deflated; for, in Charles' only speech, he shows himself to be a vain and pompous idiot. Thus if Charles does not possess self-knowledge, much less can he aid the reader in understanding those other characters about him. In Charles' case as in his wife's, then, a character's chosen language is of great

importance in helping one to determine the quality of his or her character.

"A Collection of Letters"

Written in 1791, "A Collection of Letters" consists of a number of short unconnected letters which burlesque select literary conventions or deal with certain social issues. Each epistle, thus, comprises a fragmented "tale" on its own. Both the discontinuity and brevity of these tales impede the development of the individual characters. This is not to say that these fictional figures are left totally devoid of personalities; however more could have been accomplished had the "tales" been longer and a little more finished. Due to the lack of replying correspondents, all the letters in this collection seem diary-like in nature: they record the writers' feelings and their different perceptions of those around them. The dialogue contained in these epistles also serves to shed light on the characters.

"Letter the first" is "From A Mother to her freind" (150). In it, the mother talks about her "Daughters Introduction into Life" (150). Augusta and her younger sister, Margaret, are the two girls who are deemed ready by their mother "to become conversant with the World" (150). Jane Austen gives one the programme of their "entree into life" (150); it is an itinerary which mocks the absurdity of the social convention of "coming out":

> Tomorrow Mr Stanly's family will drink tea with us, and perhaps the Miss Phillips will meet them. On Tuesday we shall pay Morning-Visits--On Wednesday we are to dine at Westbrook. On Thursday we have Company at home. On Friday we are to be at a private concert at Sir John Wynne's--& on Saturday we expect Miss Dawson to call in the morning,--which will complete my Daughters Introduction into Life. (150)

In this passage, the mother gives her friend a list of the various activities her daughters will be involved in during the different days of the week; then she ends her account with the happy conviction that this programme of action "will complete my Daughters Introduction into Life" (150). The young Jane Austen, who has been learning all her life, here scorns the notion of getting to know "the World" (150) in a single week of visits. This ridiculing of a social itinerary is again seen in *Northanger Abbey*. That the mother is just as excited and agitated as Augusta

and Margaret with regard to this great affair is registered in her letter to her friend: her whole letter deals with the event and what dialogue she records refers to it. Her address to the two girls, warning them against being "'swayed by the Follies & Vices of others'" (151), is a little melodramatic in tone; nonetheless it reflects her concern for them and betrays her anxious desire that they should conduct themselves in such a manner "as will not disgrace their appearance in the World" (150). It is, indeed, with a sigh of relief that she pens: "This mighty affair is now happily over, & my Girls *are out* " (150).

The mother's letter not only describes her own feelings, but also those of her daughters. The reader is told that "poor Augusta could hardly breathe, while Margaret was all Life & Rapture" (151) when the moment for their introduction to the world had arrived. Thus, while Augusta and Margaret may both be similarly characterised as "sweet Girls--. Sensible yet unaffected--Accomplished yet Easy--. Lively yet Gentle" (150), they do have distinct personalities as their different responses to their imminent introduction into society indicate. Margaret's "'The long-expected Moment is now arrived . . . and we shall soon be in the World'" (151) signals the extrovert in her character, whilst Augusta's inability to breathe normally indicates her nervous nature. The reader is then told of the girls' conduct during their time with Mrs. Cope (151-2); their behaviour at this meeting confirms their mother's judgement of them "that *they* will not disgrace their Education" (150). Augusta and Margaret, then, are fairly consistently characterised. However one could wish that the author had further continued with the "tale" so as to bring out their common traits and yet demonstrate their distinct qualities of personality.

The first part of "Letter the second" burlesques the love life of the sentimental heroine by focusing on the writer's inability to keep a lover -- a phenomenon quite alien to the sentimental female protagonist who generally possesses an amazing ability to draw numerous contenders for her hand. For the most part, however, "Letter the second" concentrates on Miss Jane's story of her life after her marriage to Captain Dashwood. In fact, most of the dialogue recorded in the letter revolves around Miss Jane's affairs. Jane Austen uses this dialogue and

the epistolary style of the "tale" to experiment with the technique of counterpointing as a means of revealing a character's emotional state.

> I could not help telling her how much she [Miss Jane] engaged my Admiration--. --"Oh! Miss Jane" (said I)--and stopped from an inability at the moment of expressing myself as I could wish--"Oh! Miss Jane" (I repeated)--I could not think of words to suit my feelings--She seemed waiting for my Speech--. I was confused--distressed--. My thoughts were bewildered--and I could only add "How do you do?" (153)

In this passage, Sophia twice utters the words, "'Oh! Miss Jane'" (153); both times she stops short of what she really wanted to say -- that is, to tell Miss Jane "how much she engaged my Admiration" (153) -- for lack of the appropriate words to express herself. Sophia's speech at this moment is fraught with emotion. This is evinced by her frequent use of dashes which join half-uttered phrases indicating her deep and unspeakable feelings. Sophia's awkward "'How do you do?'" (153) betrays her embarassment at having started something she is presently unable to carry through -- for she is unable to find the words suitable to expressing her regard for Miss Jane. Sophia's confusion is made even clearer through Jane Austen's technique of counterpointing her speech with her written language: that is, Sophia says something and then explains her feelings at that moment with regard to what she has just said. Sophia's letter and dialogue with Miss Jane, then, reveal her highly emotional state. But it must be noted that Sophia's response to Miss Jane has been evoked by nothing more than her observance of "something so sweet, so mild in [Miss Jane's] . . . Countenance" (153). By bringing the reader's attention to the little matter which has induced Sophia's confusion and strong emotion here, Jane Austen burlesques the often consequential events which are usually accompanied by much mental agitation in sentimental romance.

What the reader knows about Miss Jane is what she tells Sophia about herself. That Miss Jane is ruled by her heart rather than by her head is made clear in her story of her life. Miss Jane's dialogue also reveals a sensibility which includes a sensitivity to other people's feelings. In saying, "'My dear Sophia be not uneasy at having exposed Yourself--I will turn the Conversation without appearing to notice it'" (153), she is essentially telling Sophia not to worry about her confusion, hence relieving Sophia of her embarrassment. Miss Jane also has a

flair for the dramatic as is seen in her introduction of her life story:

> "Ride where you may, Be Candid where You can," She added, "*I* rode once, but it is many years ago"--She spoke this in so Low & tremulous a Voice, that I was silent--Struck with her Manner of Speaking I could make no reply. "I have not ridden, continued she fixing her Eyes on my face, since I was married." (153-4)

Miss Jane's "Low & tremulous" (153) voice betrays her emotion just as much as it engages her audience's attention. And when she fixes her eyes on Sophia's face, she practically mesmerizes her friend with the intensity of her gaze and the startling quality of her revelation. However Sophia's eager "'I hope you have not done'" when Miss Jane comes to the conclusion of her story is a polite way of saying "'I hope you have . . . done'" (155). For in the Miss Jane story, Jane Austen is making fun of the "life and adventures" convention of sentimental literature. Miss Jane goes on relentlessly telling her story, while Sophia can hardly wait to get on with telling about her own misfortunes. Miss Jane is, therefore, not very responsive to Sophia's feelings in this case. Miss Jane's dialogue with Sophia, thus, reveals her sensibility, and leaning toward the dramatic; both are well documented in her consciousness of the pathetic quality of her story (155), her tears (154), her sigh (154), her affectionate references to those she had loved and lost (154-5), and her general manner of speaking (153-5).

In "Letter the third," Jane Austen looks at the social issue of dependence upon an unwilling giver. This letter contains a story line somewhat like that of *Mansfield Park*. The earlier composition tells the tale of a young girl who is forced to rely on the charitable offices of a mean woman due to her own impecunious circumstances. In "Letter the third," Maria Williams is forced to put up with Lady Greville's rude and condescending attitude toward her for both hers and her mother's sakes; fortunately for Maria, however, she is not entirely dependent on Lady Greville's generosity. In *Mansfield Park*, Fanny Price is the young heroine who has to depend on the goodness of her Aunt and Uncle Bertram. However, due to the former's indolence and the latter's preoccupation with his business affairs, Fanny is often left to experience the uncharitable manipulations of her aunt, Mrs. Norris. Thus, like Maria who is suffered to stand in the wind and cold in order to oblige Lady Greville's request that she come out to see her, Fanny is forced to deliver roses in the hot sun in order to satisfy Mrs. Norris'

penchant for fresh flowers.

Maria and Lady Greville are the two characters who stand out in "Letter the third." Earlier, I suggested that Maria's situation in life resembles Fanny's in *Mansfield Park*. But Maria and Lady Greville also call to mind Elizabeth Bennet and Lady Catherine De Bourgh of *Pride and Prejudice*. The relationship of the first two characters bears, in part, some similarity to that between the latter two figures: Maria is a girl of mettle who will not be intimidated by Lady Greville's condescending ways towards her; and in this display of a strong personality, Maria may be likened to Elizabeth, who, in her turn, will not be cowed by Lady Catherine's insolent behaviour towards her. Maria, the heroine and the writer of this epistle, is characterised as a proud and spirited girl who will not allow Lady Greville's taunting to upset her; her responses to Lady Greville's probing about her family are much like Elizabeth's to Lady Catherine's questions regarding the education of the Bennet sisters.

> "Pray Miss Maria in what way of business was your Grandfather? for Miss Mason & I cannot agree whether he was a Grocer or a Bookbinder" I saw that she wanted to mortify me and was resolved if I possibly could to prevent her seeing that her scheme succeeded. "Neither Madam; he was a Wine Merchant." "Aye, I knew he was in some such low way--He broke did not he?" "I beleive not Ma'am." "Did not he abscond?" "I never heard that he did." "At least he died insolvent?" "I was never told so before." "Why was not your Father as poor as a Rat?" "I fancy not;" "Was not he in the Kings Bench once?" "I never saw him there." *She* gave me ***such*** a look, & turned away with a great passion; while I was half delighted with myself for my impertinence, & half afraid of being thought too saucy. (158)

In this exchange between Maria and Lady Greville, the latter is obviously trying to humiliate the former before Miss Mason by putting some very rude and pointed questions to her. Lady Greville's questions gradually become more offensive and insulting: she begins by asking Maria about her grandfather's occupation and ends by practically implying that her father was "in the Kings Bench" (158). But Maria gives Lady Greville tit for tat: her unrevealing answers are short, matter of fact and to the point, thereby leaving her ladyship both without any excuses to insult her and bereft of words to attack her. It will be noticed that there is a rhythm to this verbal sparring between the two women -- and Maria's quick but cool responses to Lady Greville's aggressive manoeuvres are all the sharper for this counterpoint effect. Thus, unlike Fanny in *Mansfield Park*, but like Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice*, Maria takes a more active

stand against the older woman who bullies her. For Maria is no quiet mouse; she only tolerates Lady Greville because "my Mother is always admonishing me to be humble & patient if I wish to make my way in the world. She insists on my accepting every invitation of Lady Greville, or . . . I would never enter either her House, or her Coach, with the disagreable certainty I always have of being abused for my Poverty while I am in them" (157). That Maria possesses good measures of daring and spunk, then, is reflected in her exchange with Lady Greville; these qualities help to support her spirit against the abrasive tongue and personality of her tormentor.

In "Letter the third," Jane Austen demonstrates rather than tells her reader what Lady Greville is like. Lady Greville's dialogue reveals her mean and inconsiderate character; the condescending sting of her backhanded compliment on Maria's new gown is immediately felt:

> "So Miss Maria (said her Ladyship as she saw me advancing to the door of the Carriage) you seem very smart tonight--*My* poor Girls will appear quite to disadvantage by *you*. I only hope your Mother may not have distressed herself to set *you* off. Have you got a new Gown on?"
>
> "Yes Ma'am," replied I with as much indifference as I could assume.
>
> "Aye, and a fine one too I think . . . I dare say it is all very smart--But I must own, for you know I always speak my mind, that I think it was quite a needless peice of expence--Why could not you have worn your old striped one? It is not my way to find fault with people because they are poor, for I always think that they are more to be despised & pitied than blamed for it, especially if they cannot help it, but at the same time I must say that in my opinion your old striped Gown would have been quite fine enough for its wearer--for to tell you the truth (I always speak my mind) I am very much afraid that one half of the people in the room will not know whether you have a Gown on or not--But I suppose you intend to make your fortune tonight--Well, the sooner the better; & I wish you success." (156)

In the passage above, Lady Greville begins by telling Maria how very smart she looks. She then goes on to note that "'*My* poor Girls will appear quite to disadvantage by *you*'" (156). Lady Greville's reference to her "'poor'" girls and her use of the word "'disadvantage'" (156) effectively conjure a comparison between the poorly circumstanced Maria and her well-off daughters. This is done in the hopes of dampening Maria's spirits. Lady Greville's continual harping on Maria's fine new gown betrays her vexation with the latter; her statement that Maria had intended to make her fortune by it reflects a jealous conceit with regard to her own daughters' futures. That Maria could possibly be better attired than her daughters had until

now seemed an impossibility to Lady Greville; and that Maria is actually looking finer than her own two girls at the moment is, for her, a justifiable cause for wrath and exasperation. Lady Greville even has an excuse for her tactless remarks to Maria: "'I always speak my mind,'" she says (156). Indeed she practically equates what she says with (what she perceives to be) the truth: "'for to tell you the truth (I always speak my mind) I am very much afraid that one half of the people in the room will not know whether you have a Gown on or not'" (156). Lady Greville's offensive comment that Maria's "'old striped Gown would have been quite fine enough for its wearer'" (156) reveals her ill-breeding; her statement that "'It is not my way to find fault with people because they are poor, for I always think that they are more to be despised & pitied than blamed for it, especially if they cannot help it'" (156) exposes her uncharitable attitude towards those who are less fortunate than herself. In this speech, Lady Greville conveniently disregards the fact that no one wants to be poor. Yet she would despise those who are and condescendingly pity them. In other words, she is blaming them for being poor even though she has said that they should not be "'blamed for it . . . especially if they cannot help it'" (156). Lady Greville's statement regarding poverty and those afflicted by it is, therefore, a mindless one. Lady Greville's unlikable character traits are, perhaps, best exemplified in her summons of Maria to her carriage "though the Wind was extremely high and very cold" (159). Lady Greville's selfish and inconsiderate behaviour, in this instance, is clearly indicated in her neglect for Maria's physical comfort though her daughter, Ellen, brings her attention to it: "'I am afraid you find it very cold Maria.' said Ellen" (159). Lady Greville's answer to this observation, however, is not very heartening:

> "Yes, it is an horrible East wind"--said her Mother--"I assure you I can hardly bear the window down--But you are used to being blown about the wind Miss Maria & that is what has made your Complexion so ruddy & coarse. You young Ladies who cannot often ride in a Carriage never mind what weather you trudge in, or how the wind shews your legs. I would not have *my* Girls stand out of doors as you do in such a day as this. But some sort of people have no feelings either of cold or Delicacy--" (159)

In Lady Greville's speech, one sees how she generalises about ladies of Maria's situation in life as a means not only of rationalising but also of justifying her treatment of the poor girl. As in her harangue with regard to Maria's new gown, she makes a comparison here between Maria

and her daughters, thereby emphasising their social and economic differences. Lady Greville's intent in calling at Maria's house was to invite the latter to her own house for a meal. Yet, her invitation is not courteously given; like her impertinent message to Maria "'that she should not get out but that Miss Maria must come to the Coach-door, as she wanted to speak to her, and that she must make haste & come immediately--'" (159), it is given in a rude and condescending manner: "' you may dine with us the day after tomorrow--Not tomorrow, remember, do not come tomorrow, for we expect Lord and Lady Clermont & Sir Thomas Stanley's family--There will be no occasion for your being very fine for I shant send the Carriage--If it rains you may take an umbrella'" (159). Lady Greville's manner of speaking as she issues her invitation -- or rather, command -- shows that she feels that she is doing Maria a favour. That she considers Maria to be almost as lowly as a servant girl is heard in her patronising "'If it rains you may take an umbrella'" (159). Lady Greville's dialogue reveals her self-importance; she does not have any respect for Maria's feelings because the latter is not as financially well-off as she herself is. Lady Greville's self-consequence and disregard for the heroine's feelings condemn her in the reader's eyes; and, like Mrs. Norris and Lady Catherine in *Mansfield Park* and *Pride and Prejudice* respectively, she fails to capture, let alone hold, the reader's sympathy.

"Letter the fourth" largely consists of a conversation between two women, Miss Grenville and the writer of the epistle. In the course of their dialogue, the latter offers the former her confidence and friendship as a means of inducing Miss Grenville to disclose "the history of her Life, who were her Parents, where she came from, and what had befallen her" (160). However the writer's efforts fail because Miss Grenville is not very forthcoming with the details of her life, nor is she in need of her questioner's overbearing offer of instant friendship. Thus, in this way, Jane Austen plays on the all too common literary device of strangers telling each other their life stories as if they were bosom friends.

Jane Austen's persona in "Letter the fourth" is characterised as an impertinent busybody who deviously mixes "the appearance of Sentiment & Freindship" (162) with

insolence in order to engage Miss Grenville in a self-revealing conversation and satisfy her own curiosity in the process. In the course of the dialogue between Miss Grenville and the persona, one sees that the latter is neither wanting in impudence -- indeed she says just as much (160-1) -- nor perseverence when she has "any end in veiw" (161). Mary's correspondent is very responsive to Miss Grenville's every gesture and word and tone of voice. When Miss Grenville sighs, she longs "to know for why" (161); when Miss Grenville mentions that she has met with some misfortunes, she burns "with impatience to know every thing" (161); and when Miss Grenville speaks "in so mournfull & solemn an accent," she is only "actually silenced" (161) for a few moments before resuming her attack by challenging Miss Grenville to accept "'the offer I make you of my Confidence & Freindship, in return to which I shall only ask for yours'" (162). The writer's sensitivity to Miss Grenville's manner of speech, however, is of the qualified variety; for she is not really interested in how Miss Grenville speaks, but rather, only, in what Miss Grenville has to impart. Thus she is sensitive to Miss Grenville's gestures, words, and tone of voice only in so far as they serve to provide the clues to what she wants to know of Miss Grenville's affairs. It is, therefore, not surprising that the writer, whose offer of confidence and friendship to Miss Grenville has been gently but firmly turned down by her new acquaintance, should be forced to try a different approach towards her objective: "I found that by the appearance of Sentiment & Freindship nothing was to be gained & determined therefore to renew my Attacks by Questions & Suppositions" (162). The writer's thick-skinned approach toward discovering all about Miss Grenville betrays her want of delicacy and reveals her disregard for Miss Grenville's feelings. Hence one feels absolutely no sympathy for her when her last attack on Miss Grenville backfires and she is left "quite silenced" and never feeling "so awkward in my Life" (162).

In "Letter the fifth," Jane Austen touches on the sentimental issue of love at first sight and, also, the socio-economic one of marriage and money. This "tale" is a story about the relationship between Henrietta and Musgrove, two lovers who are presently separated from each other because of problems of marriage and money. In this last epistle contained in "A

Collection of Letters," Jane Austen creates distinct speech patterns and writing styles for her hero and heroine; their chosen language, expressing their attitudes toward the concept of love, reveals the kind of people they are.

Tom Musgrove is described by the writer of this letter as "the most amiable, & the handsomest Man in England" (164). His cousin, Lady Scudamore, adds that he "'is a charming young fellow, has seen a great deal of the World, and writes the best Love-letters I ever read'" (165). What Henrietta calls "such a masterpeice of Writing" (163) is printed below:

> It is a month to day since I beheld my lovely Henrietta, & the sacred anniversary must & shall be kept in a manner becoming the day--by writing to her. Never shall I forget the moment when her Beauties first broke on my sight--No time as you well know can erase it from my Memory. . . . When the lovely Creature first entered the room, Oh! what were my sensations? The sight of you was like the sight of a wonderful fine Thing. I started--I gazed at her with Admiration--She appeared every moment more Charming, and the unfortunate Musgrove became a Captive to your Charms before I had time to look about me. Yes Madam, I had the happiness of adoring you, an happiness for which I cannot be too grateful. "What said he to himself is Musgrove allowed to die for Henrietta? Enviable Mortal; and may he pine for her who is the object of universal Admiration, . . . Adorable Henrietta how beautiful you are! I declare you quite divine! You are more than Mortal. You are an angel. You are Venus herself. In short Madam you are the prettiest Girl I ever saw in my Life--& her beauty is encreased in her Musgroves Eyes, by permitting him to love her & allowing me to hope. And Ah! Angelic Miss Henrietta Heaven is my Witness how ardently I do hope for the death of your villainous Uncle & his Abandoned Wife, Since my fair one will not consent to be mine till their decease has placed her in affluence above what my fortune can procure--. . . . Amiable princess of my Heart farewell--Of that heart which trembles while it signs itself your most ardent Admirer & devoted humble Serv.t. T. Musgrove (162-3)

Musgrove's letter shows that he does not underestimate the power of rhetorical language as a means of calling forth the passions he wishes to evoke in Henrietta's heart. However, his letter as rhetoric, though pretentious, is, at least to one's eyes, a failure. Rather than being consistent in the more formal (rhetorical) use of the third person in his references to both Henrietta and himself, he is in a complete muddle about grammatical persons: Henrietta is sometimes "you" and sometimes "she" in pointless alternation; and he is sometimes "I" and sometimes "he" (162-3). His lame simile, "The sight of you was like the sight of a wonderful fine Thing" (163), shows just how clumsy he is with the Petrarchan device of evoking images for comparison with the essence of his mistress. And when Musgrove does compare Henrietta's beauty with that of Venus, he uses the words "you are" rather than "she is" (163) hence losing

-- at least with the reader -- the impact which a more formal and elevated presentation of his address would have had. But fortunately for Musgrove, the simple Henrietta falls victim to his rhetoric and charms; according to her, then, he would be considered as always having the right words to express his feelings for her. Thus, when one considers the effect which his words must have on Henrietta, one must admit that despite his errors in rhetoric, the language of love comes easily -- too easily -- to him; for one must remember that it is Henrietta -- and not the reader -- whom he is trying to impress; and in that context, one should, therefore, measure his ability to express himself according to its influence on Henrietta's heart. In her conversation with Henrietta, Lady Scudamore mentions that "'it was the work of some hours for me to persuade the poor despairing Youth [Musgrove] that you had really a preference for him; but when at last he could no longer deny the force of my arguments, or discredit what I told him, his transports, his Raptures, his Extacies are beyond my power to describe'" (169). When one bears Lady Scudamore's report in mind, Musgrove's chosen language would seem to indicate that he believes he feels what he says he does. However the reader cannot help but sense that Musgrove does not feel so much so deeply. While speaking about Henrietta in his conversation with Lady Scudamore, Musgrove suddenly exclaims "'Yes I'm in love I feel it now/ And Henrietta Halton has undone me'" (167). The melodramatic tone of this declaration of love is matched by his equally dramatic use of images in another expression of his love for Henrietta: he talks about "what my transports will be when I feel the dear precious drops trickle on my face'" (168) after he has experienced the "'exquisite Gratification of dieing for her, of falling a victim of her Charms'" (167). Musgrove's theatrical manner of speaking calls one's attention to himself; this indicates his self-preoccupation which, in turn, reflects his self-love. Musgrove's attitude towards love, then, is narcissistic in nature; he is more in love with himself than with the girl he professes to adore.

Unlike Musgrove, Henrietta lacks the gift of rhetoric; she writes plainly and says what she feels in straightforward language. This trait is especially evident in her letter to Musgrove (164); she writes:

> My dearest Musgrove--. Words can not express how happy your Letter made me; I thought I should have cried for Joy, for I love you better than any body in the World. I think you the most amiable, & handsomest Man in England, & so to be sure you are. I never read so sweet a Letter in my Life. Do write me another just like it, & tell me you are in love with me in every other line. I quite die to see you. How shall we manage to see one another? for we are so much in love that we cannot live asunder. Oh! my dear Musgrove you cannot think how impatiently I wait for the death of my Uncle and Aunt--If they will not die soon, I beleive I shall run mad, for I get more in love with you every day of my Life. (164)

Henrietta's simple language reflects her essentially simple mind. Her letter to Matilda, which wholly concentrates on her love affair with Musgrove, reveals her childish way of thinking: for Henrietta, romantic love means well written love letters since she often alludes to Musgrove's talent for writing such epistles. Henrietta's naivete is exposed in her dialogue with Lady Scudamore; for Henrietta judges Musgrove according to his ability to spout sentimental rhetoric concerning her. In the passage below, Lady Scudamore repeats some of Musgrove's dialogue with her for Henrietta's benefit; Henrietta then presents her own sentiments on Musgrove's speech:

> "Ah! Cousin imagine what my transports will be when I feel the dear precious drops trickle on my face! Who would not die to taste such extacy! And when I am interred, may the divine Henrietta bless some happier Youth with her affection, May he be as tenderly attached to her as the hapless Musgrove & while *he* crumbles to dust, May they live an example of Felicity in the Conjugal state!"
>
> Did you ever hear any thing so pathetic? What a charming wish, to be lain at my feet when he was dead! Oh! what an exalted mind he must have to be capable of such a wish! (168)

Henrietta's letter reveals her self-centredness; she is only pleased with Musgrove because his words and sentiments flatter her and appeal to her vanity. This egocentricity, which is extended to an ardent desire for her aunt's and uncle's decease in order that she might claim her inheritance and marry her lover, is the dominant trait in her character. Henrietta Halton, thus, comes across as a naive girl with a hard edge who measures love according to the amount of sensibility and sentimentality Musgrove is able to express in his dialogue on her and in his letter to her.

"Lesley Castle"

Written in 1792, "Lesley Castle" stands as the first of the last of Jane Austen's juvenilia. It concentrates on characterisation rather than on story telling. Only two events occur in the course of this fragment: Lady Lesley marries Sir George; Henry Hervey sustains fatal injuries from a bad fall. Most of "Lesley Castle" centres on the various personages' reactions to these events; their diverse responses reveal the different qualities of their characters.

"Lesley Castle" follows what Richard Whately calls "the plan of a fictitious correspondence" where "by allowing each personage to be the speaker in turn, the feelings of each may be described by himself, and his character and conduct by another." [7] In this way, one learns about Margaret's feelings regarding her stepmother, Lady Lesley and vice versa; in this way too, one learns of Charlotte's (and her sister's) sentiments on hearing about Henry's fall. Like the letters themselves, the dialogue recorded in them reveals the individuals' characters. It is also of note that since the characters are only allowed to develop in the imagination of the reader through his or her reading of their letters and dialogue, he or she is only being given subjective views of the characters appearing within this fragment.

In "Lesley Castle," Jane Austen uses the social issue of a second marriage (and all the problems inherent in it) as a pretext for developing Margaret Lesley's character as a worldly being:

> I reflected that if by this second Marriage Sir George should have a second family, our fortunes must be considerably diminushed--that if his Wife should be of an extravagant turn, she would encourage him to persevere in that Gay & Dissipated way of Life to which little encouragement would be necessary, and which has I fear already proved but too detrimental to his health and fortune--that she would now become Mistress of those Jewels which once adorned our Mother, and which Sir George had always promised us-- (116)

This passage reveals Margaret's awareness of the world of realities; it also shows up her mercenary nature where her fortune and her mother's jewels are concerned. Such materialism is evinced in the easy transitions she makes between her mention of her father's health and his fortune, and her mother's memory and her jewels. Margaret's concerns are not so much for the

health of her father or the remembrance of her mother; rather, they are centred on what she stands to lose (materially) in Sir George's marriage to Susan Fitzgerald. Margaret's envy, with regard to her new stepmother's good fortune, is made especially evident in her uncomplimentary remarks on Lady Lesley's physical attributes:

> We see more of Lady L. who always makes her appearance (highly rouged) at Dinner-time. Alas! what Delightful Jewels will she be decked in this evening . . . Yet I wonder how she can herself delight in wearing them; surely she must be sensible of the ridiculous impropriety of loading her little diminutive figure with such superfluous ornaments; . . . How becoming would Diamonds be on our fine majestic figures! . . . I am sure if I have reflected in this Manner once, I have fifty times. (137)

Margaret's pointed comments on Lady Lesley's "highly rouged" appearance and "the ridiculous impropriety of loading her diminutive figure with such superfluous ornaments" (137) reflect not only her jealousy of Lady Lesley's good luck, but also her envy of her stepmother's good looks. That she is filled with anger, frustration and exasperation whenever she thinks of the loss of her mother's jewels to Lady Lesley is made apparent in the following words: "How becoming would Diamonds be on our fine majestic figures! . . . I am sure if I have reflected in this Manner once, I have fifty times" (137). Margaret is not merely materialistic; she is also egotistical:

> tho' retired from almost all the World . . . we [Margaret and Matilda] are neither dull nor unhappy; on the contrary there never were two more lively, more agreable or more witty Girls, than we are; . . . We read, we work, we walk and when fatigued with these Employments releive our spirits, either by a lively song, a graceful Dance, or by some smart bon-mot, and witty repartee. We are handsome . . . very handsome and the greatest of our Perfections is, that we are entirely insensible of them ourselves. (111)

Margaret is as hypocritical as she is egotistical: she is both as anxious to show that she is not vain as she is eager to make known what she perceives to be a fact that she is perfect. Her jealous conceit concerning her own physical attributes is loudly announced in her derogatory assessment of Lady Lesley's figure (122) and her tactless description of Charlotte's features (135-6).

Margaret's letters reveal her literarily acquired sensibility: she adopts conventional ideas from novels of romance, uses stock phrases from the same, and then relates them to her own situations and circumstances in life:

> Ah! my dear Freind, how happy should I be to see you within these venerable Walls! It is now four years since my removal from School has separated me from you; that two such tender Hearts, so closely linked together by the ties of simpathy and Freindship, should be so widely removed from each other, is vastly moving. (111-2)

> my Attention was attracted by the appearance of a Young Man the most lovely of his Sex, who at that moment entered the Room. . . . From the first moment I beheld him, I was certain that on him depended the future Happiness of my Life. (136)

Margaret's sensibility is not untainted by her hypocritical nature; and in the following excerpt taken from "Letter the Tenth" (135-8), one wonders whether Margaret does not actually enjoy the attentions bestowed on her despite her assertions to the contrary:

> I every day more regret the serene and tranquil Pleasures of the Castle we have left, in exchange for the uncertain & unequal Amusements of this vaunted City. Not that I will pretend to assert that these uncertain and unequal Amusements are in the least Degree unpleasing to me; on the contrary I enjoy them extremely and should enjoy them even more, were I not certain that every appearance I make in Public but rivetts the Chains of those unhappy Beings whose Passion it is impossible not to pity, tho' it is out of my power to return. . . . it is my sensibility for the sufferings of so many amiable Young Men, my Dislike of the extreme Admiration I meet with, and my Aversion to being so celebrated both in Public, in Private, in Papers, & in Printshops, that are the reasons why I cannot more fully enjoy, the Amusements so various and pleasing of London. (135)

Here Margaret tells Charlotte the many reasons which prevent her from enjoying London more fully. Yet one cannot help but think that the lady does protest too much -- that she really glories in the extraordinary amount of attention paid to her by the members of the opposite sex. Margaret's sentimental biases may, at first, seem to be at odds with her materialistic tendencies. However Jane Austen manages to overcome this discrepancy by presenting us with a character who is something of a hypocrite. Thus, the reader learns to recognize Margaret's display of sensibility for an artifice which only partially drapes the hard and egocentric view of life which she really holds.

Margaret's stepmother, Lady Lesley, has about as high an opinion of her stepdaughter as Margaret has of her. In her letter to Charlotte, she writes of her disappointment with Margaret and Matilda: "Matilda and Margaret Lesley are two great, tall, out of the way, over-grown Girls, just of a proper size to inhabit a Castle almost as Large in comparison as themselves. I wish my dear Charlotte that you could but behold these Scotch Giants; I am sure

they would frighten you out of your wits" (123). Lady Susan's lack of appreciation for her Scotch stepdaughters extends to an all encompassing disregard for anything Scotch -- in other words, anything and everything that is alien to her and her way of life: "These girls have no Music, but Scotch Airs, no Drawings but Scotch Mountains, and no Books but Scotch Poems--And I hate everything Scotch" (124). Lady Lesley's words reveal her narrowmindedness. Her bigotry points to a self-centredness which is reflected in her vanity (124) and inordinate preoccupation with herself.

In her letter to Charlotte, Lady Lesley writes:

> I have a very great Affection for my Brother and should be extremely sorry to see him unhappy, which I suppose he means to be if he cannot marry Matilda, as moreover I know that his Circumstances will not allow him to marry any one without a fortune, and that Matilda's is entirely dependant on her Father, who will neither have his own inclination, nor my permission to give her anything at present, I thought it would be doing a good-natured action by my Brother to let him know as much, in order that he might choose for himself, whether to conquer his passion, or Love and Despair. (124-5)

However, Lady Lesley's intentions, in her conversation with her brother, William, are never carried out; for her dialogue concentrates on the degradation of the Lesley girls (before her brother) rather than on the issue at hand. Lady Lesley's discussion of the Lesley girls' lack of beauty reflects her jealous vanity with regard to her own very different looks. This is evinced in her impatience with William when he dares to imply that her beauty is not of the natural sort and her insistence (for Charlotte's benefit) that it is. Indeed Lady Lesley does not stay to give William her advice precisely because he had pointed to the artificiality of her colour and she could not bear "to be so suspected by my Brother" (127). Thus, though Lady Lesley writes that "I could not summon Patience enough, to stay & give him that Advice respecting his Attachment to Matilda which had first induced me from pure Love to him to begin the conversation" (128), one cannot help thinking that if she had been more concerned for her brother's welfare and less with her fortune or her looks, she would have found enough patience to intelligently discuss his growing affection for Matilda.

Besides Margaret Lesley, Charlotte Lutterell stands as the other major correspondent in "Lesley Castle." Charlotte is a chatterbox whose letters are peppered with numerous notes on

foods and the dressing of them. This preoccupation with her favourite subject is especially seen in her uses of food metaphors for describing emotional states:

> my Sister came running to me in the Store-room with her face as White as Whipt syllabub, and told me that Hervey had been thrown from his Horse, had fractured his Scull and was pronounced by his Surgeon to be in the most emminent Danger. (113)
>
> This was certainly enough to put any one in a Passion; however, I was as cool as a Cream-cheese. . . . (129-130)

In "Letter the seventh" (128-31), Charlotte had announced that "Mama always found me *her* best Scholar" (128) for "no one [could] make a better Pye than I" (129). Unfortunately, Charlotte's inordinate interest in "Receipts" (129) is such that it is to the exclusion of all other knowledge; this is best exemplified in her comments on music and Eloisa's playing:

> I had for many years constantly hollowed whenever she played, *Bravo*, *Bravissimo*, *Encora*, *Da Capo*, *allegretto*, *con expressione*, and *Poco presto* with many other such outlandish words, all of them as Eloisa told me expressive of my Admiration; and so indeed I suppose they are, as I see some of them in every Page of every Music book, being the Sentiments I imagine of the Composer. (130)

Charlotte's obssession with foods and their preparation acts also as a crutch to her social and emotional life; and she admits almost as much in her second letter to Margaret: "I never wish to act a more principal part at a Wedding than the superintending and directing the Dinner . . . as I very much suspect that I should not have so much time for dressing my own Wedding-dinner, as for dressing that of my freinds" (121). Charlotte's disinclination to "consider *myself* as well as my Sister in my matrimonial Projects" (121) is a reflection of her refusal or inability to participate fully in life; this is signalled in her casual unconcern for the critically injured Henry Hervey's health and life and her overriding concern for the already prepared foods for the just cancelled wedding:

> I talked to her of Henry. "Dear Eloisa (said I) there's no occasion for your crying so much about such a trifle. . . . *I* may suffer most from it after all; for I shall not only be obliged to eat up all the Victuals I have dressed already, but must if Hervey should recover (which however is not very likely) dress as much for you again; or should he die (as I suppose he will) I shall still have to prepare a Dinner for you whenever you marry any one else. So you see that 'tho perhaps for the present it may afflict you to think of Henry's sufferings, Yet I dare say he'll die soon, and then his pain will be over and you will be easy, whereas my Trouble will last much longer for work hard as I may, I am certain that the pantry cannot be cleared in less than a fortnight." (114)

Charlotte's hobby-horse is, thus, the be all and end all of her life: it replaces the natural

human need to become emotionally attached to at least one person about her. Charlotte's emotional independence makes her an ideal observer of people and events. Through her cold and distanced stance, one gets a perceptive comment on the relationship between Margaret and Lady Lesley: "I find . . . that you are both downright jealous of each others Beauty. It is very odd that two pretty Women tho' actually Mother & Daughter cannot be in the same House without falling out about their faces" (128). Charlotte also provides one with an accurate account of Lady Lesley's character; this is later to be affirmed in the latter's own letter (123-8) to her:

> [Lady Lesley] is short, and extremely well-made; is naturally pale, but rouges a good deal; . . . She is naturally extravagant. . . . She plays, sings & Dances, but has no taste for either, and excells in none, tho' she says she is passionately fond of all. . . . she will certainly not endeavour to reclaim Sir George from the manner of living to which he has been so long accustomed, and there is therefore some reason to fear that you will be very well off, if you get any fortune at all. (119-120)

But the connection between the Charlotte who is emotionally uninvolved with people and thus gives fair and unbiased opinions of them, and the Charlotte who is gossipy and obsessed with housekeeping and the dressing of foods is slight indeed. For in Charlotte, Jane Austen has created a character who hovers uncertainly between burlesque and realism; this is seen most clearly in the differences of style in her letters: when Charlotte is involved with the details of housekeeping, she gushes breathlessly on in long sentences (112-3); when she is employed as commentator, she becomes aphoristic and cold in tone (119-121). Charlotte's semi-burlesque characterisation betrays Jane Austen's recent departure from the production of purely parodic characters (such as those found in "Frederic & Elfrida" and "Jack & Alice") and reveals her latest endeavours toward the development of more realistic personages.

"The Three Sisters"

"The Three Sisters" is a social comedy which deals with the issue of marriage and its economic implications for the single woman. Written in 1792, it follows "Lesley Castle" in its greater emphasis on character drawing rather than on story telling. An epistolary novel, "The

Three Sisters" presents the thoughts and feelings of the three Stanhope girls -- Mary, Sophia and Georgiana -- when confronted with the prospect of marriage to a man they detest, Mr. Watts. Their responses to this matter indicate the different values which they hold. Being the oldest of the Stanhope girls, Mary is the first of the three to receive Mr. Watts' proposal of marriage; she finally accepts him after much vacillation on her part. Jane Austen than goes on to present what Southam calls "an unromantic negotiation of settlement and rights" [1] between Mary and her mother on the one hand, and Mr. Watts on the other. This bargaining is recorded in Georgiana's letter to her friend, Anne.

Epistles play important roles in "The Three Sisters": not only do they form the framework of the tale; they also present the personages' various views on its central issue -- marriage. These opinions, which are couched in terms of images in the language of the characters concerned, reveal the kind of people they are. And since the subject of "The Three Sisters" is marriage, what the characters think of the institution, and what it means to them as expressed in their chosen language, become an effective way of illuminating their personalities for the reader.

"The Three Sisters" opens with a letter from Mary Stanhope to her friend, Fanny. Mary's letter shows her to be a fool. Being unable to think clearly, she is dazzled and confused by the prospect of marriage to a man she can never love.

> I am the happiest creature in the World, for I have received an offer of marriage from Mr. Watts. It is the first I have ever had & I hardly know how to value it enough. How I will triumph over the Duttons! I do not intend to accept it, at least I beleive not, but as I am not quite certain I gave him an equivocal answer. . . . I do not know what to do. If I refuse him he as good as told me that he should offer himself to Sophia and if ***she*** refused him to Georgiana, & I could not bear to have either of them married before me. If I accept him I know I shall be miserable all the rest of my Life, for he is very ill tempered & peevish extremely jealous, & so stingy that there is no living in the house with him. . . . I believe I shall have him. It will be such a triumph to be married before Sophy, Georgiana & the Duttons; . . . He said he should come again tomorrow & take my final answer, so I believe I must get him while I can. I know the Duttons will envy me & I shall be able to chaprone Sophy & Georgiana to all the Winter Balls. . . . I would refuse him at once if I were certain that neither of my Sisters would accept him, & if they did not, he would not offer to the Duttons. I cannot run such a risk, so, if he will promise to have the Carriage ordered as I like, I will have him, . . . (57-60)

In her letter to Fanny, Mary chatters on in an unsettled manner: she wavers between "I do not

intend to accept it, at least I beleive not" (57) when she considers her dislike for Mr. Watts, and "I believe I shall have him" (58) when she thinks of her early marriage as a personal triumph over Sophia, Georgiana, and the Duttons. Mary's letter exposes her various emotional states as she muses over her offer of marriage from Mr. Watts. It reveals her excitement on receiving Mr. Watts' proposal of marriage, her uncertainty with regard to her acceptance of it, her eagerness for consequence, her fears of being miserable all the rest of her life should she marry him, and her nervousness on being constrained to give him a final answer very soon. Mary's bewildered musing brings hard reality into the picture. As a single young woman without a dowry, it is Mary's social responsibility to marry well where she can. But Mary is obviously not taken with her suitor, and only her vanity -- her love of consequence -- prompts her final acceptance of Mr. Watts' hand in marriage. Miss Stanhope's ridiculous motive for marrying a man she detests (67) reflects a moral instability which is indicated in her attitude towards marriage. In "The Three Sisters," Jane Austen uses the characters' dialogue on the concept of marriage as a means of revealing their similar or contrasting qualities of personality. For Mary, marriage means "'a new Carriage hung as high as the Duttons', & blue spotted with silver'" (65) and more:

> "I shall expect a new saddle horse, a suit of fine lace, and an infinite number of the most valuable Jewels. Diamonds such as never were seen . . . and Pearls, Rubies, Emeralds and Beads out of number. You must set up your Phaeton which must be cream coloured with a wreath of silver flowers round it, You must buy 4 of the finest Bays in the Kingdom & you must drive me in it every day. This is not all; You must entirely new furnish your House after my Taste, You must hire two more Footmen to attend me, two Women to wait on me, must always let me do just as I please & make a very good husband."
>
> .....
>
> "You must build me an elegant Greenhouse & stock it with plants. You must let me spend every Winter in Bath, every Spring in Town, Every Summer in taking some Tour, & every Autumn at a Watering Place, and if we are at home the rest of the year . . . You must do nothing but give Balls & Masquerades. You must build a room on purpose & a Theatre to act Plays in. The first Play we have shall be *Which is the Man*, and I will do Lady Bell Bloomer." (65)

Mary's expections in marriage are entirely materialistic -- and unrealistic -- in nature. Her self-centredness is pin-pointed in her answer to Mr. Watts' query as to what he is to expect from her in return for all her demands: "'Expect? why you may expect to have me pleased'"

(65). In other words, Mary expects to contribute nothing to her marriage but hopes to gain all that is tangible through it. Even Mrs. Stanhope, who is anxious to negotiate an advantageous settlement for her daughter, lectures Mary for having gone too far. That Mary Stanhope is a greedy fool is, thus, revealed in her confused and childlike reactions to a social issue of the real world -- a proposal of marriage.

Mary constantly exposes her girlish immaturity in her letters and speeches. She writes and speaks passionately, and declares all she feels with regard to Mr. Watts' offer of marriage without stopping to examine her mind and heart carefully. No wonder her mother exclaims, "'You are the strangest Girl in the World Mary. What you say one moment, you unsay the next'" (59). Caricatures are indicated when "the listeners no longer attempt the give and take of conversation," ' says Harding; and this statement precisely describes the condition and situation of Mary in her dialogues with her family, friends and suitor. She is treated irreverently; and if she is not to be used as a butt for laughter (69), she is looked upon as a child to be tricked or talked into an agreement or compromise with other people's schemes (60-67). In "The Three Sisters," a character's language plays an important role in determining the reader's response to him or her. And in Mary's case, she only evokes the reader's contempt because her language shows her to be shallow and egotistical in nature.

Georgiana Stanhope is Jane Austen's answer to Mary Stanhope. The two girls are strongly contrasted: whilst Mary remains the static caricature, Georgiana embodies the maturing heroine. Unlike her muddle-headed oldest sister, Georgiana does not even entertain the thought of marrying for the sake of marriage itself. She thinks clearly when confronted with the prospect of wedding Mr. Watts, and like Sophy, will not marry a man she can never learn to love or respect: "'I never would marry Mr Watts were Beggary the only alternative. So deficient in every respect! Hideous in his person and without one good Quality to make amends for it. His fortune to be sure is good. Yet not so very large! . . . It is but six times as much as my Mother's income. It will not tempt me'" (62). Georgiana's remarks on Mr. Watts point to her ideas on the concept of marriage. She is quite unlike Mary who is merely interested in the

outer trappings of status and ostentatious display to be derived from an advantageous union. Georgiana's conversation with Sophy reveals her concern with the qualities of a man she may be forced to wed -- Mr. Watts:

> "And then as to his temper; it has been reckoned bad, but may not the World be deceived in their Judgement of it. There is an open frankness in his Disposition which becomes a Man; They say he is stingy; We'll call that Prudence. They say he is suspicious. *That* proceeds from a warmth of Heart always excusable in Youth, & in short I see no reason why he should not make a very good Husband." (62)

Georgiana's manner of speech here is ironic, even flippant; yet her condemnation of Mr. Watts' bad qualities is heartfelt (62). For Georgiana, then, a good husband -- a man with qualities worthy of her respect -- is essential to ensure a happily married life.

Like many of Jane Austen's future heroines, Georgiana is intelligent, witty and perceptive; these qualities are displayed in her letter to Anne (60-71). Like many of her creator's protagonists also, Georgiana possesses a character flaw which needs to be corrected; this fault is revealed in her letter to her friend:

> Sophy & I have been practising a little deceit on our eldest Sister, to which we are not perfectly reconciled, & yet the circumstances were such that if any thing will excuse it, they must. Our neighbour Mr Watts has made proposals to Mary; . . . my Mother had given us an account of it, telling us that she certainly would not let him go farther than our family for a Wife. "And therefore (said she) If Mary wont have him Sophy must, & if Sophy wont Georgiana *shall* ."
> [But] my scheme took & Mary is resolved to do *that* to prevent our supposed happiness which she would not have done to ensure it in reality. Yet after all my Heart cannot acquit me & Sophy is even more scrupulous. (60-1, 63)

This passage refers to Georgiana's success in throwing Mary into Mr. Watts' arms. It also discloses the mischievous "delight" she takes in procuring so serious a matter as an unhappy marriage. But Georgiana's self-perception even in this situation and her conscience-stricken plea to Anne to "Quiet our Minds . . . by writing & telling us you approve our conduct" (63), indicate some room for growth in her character. Hence, one may have expected some improvement in Georgiana's personality had Jane Austen completed "The Three Sisters."

The middle sister in "The Three Sisters" is Sophia Stanhope. Sophy does not speak much nor does she write any letters in Jane Austen's epistolary fragment; but what she does say expresses some of the human values by which the author judges her personages: "'I expect my

Husband to be good tempered & Chearful; to consult my Happiness in all his Actions, & to love me with Constancy & Sincerity'" (66). This sentence also reveals Sophy's understanding of the institution of marriage. Like Georgiana, she focuses her attention on the qualities of the man himself; however, she also includes the clause that he love her with "'Constancy & Sincerity'" (66). This indicates that she possesses a more mature mind than her two sisters; it reflects a thoughtfulness and stability of character not present in Mary and only half formed in Georgiana. Sophy is also a more gentle and scrupulous person than her younger sister; she did not initiate the scheme of tricking Mary into a union with Mr. Watts nor did she participate fully in it: "Sophy did not like the idea of telling a lie & deceiving her Sister; she prevented the first & saved half her conscience by equivocation. 'I should certainly act just as Georgiana would do'" (63). Sophy's speeches show her to be intelligent and perceptive; and she may be seen as a precursor of Jane Bennet, just as Mary and Georgiana may be compared to Lydia Bennet and Elizabeth Bennet respectively.

The Mr. Collins in "The Three Sisters" is Mr. Watts. A pompous "old Man, about two & thirty, [and] very plain" (58), he is the perfect match for Mary Stanhope. Mr. Watts is consistently characterised as "'the old Fool'" (63) whom Mrs. Stanhope "would not let . . . go farther than our own family for a Wife" (61). But Mr. Watts is perfectly happy with Mrs. Stanhope's determination; and like Mr. Collins, he is resolved on wedding any one of the girls: "'If [Miss Stanhope] . . . does not choose to accept my hand, I can offer it else where, for as I am by no means guided by a particular preference to you above your Sisters it is equally the same to me which I marry of the three'" (64). Like Mary, Mr. Watts functions as a caricature in "The Three Sisters." According to Harding, "the technique of caricature allows Jane Austen to express what a person of her acute insight must always feel -- astonishment at the way the most outrageously deformed personalities are allowed an effective part in society, because society attends seriously to lip service and rationalism." [10] Harding's general observation can be used to describe Mr. Watts and his society accurately: Mrs. Stanhope is "'determined not to let such an opportunity escape of settling one of my Daughters so advantageously'" (60), and is

willing to compel either of them to marry a man -- Mr. Watts -- they detest. In doing this, Mrs. Stanhope is also demonstrating an understanding of the realities of life. Her daughters must be advantageously married off because they do not possess fortune enough either to remain single or to marry poor lovers. However Mrs. Stanhope may also be seen as an early Mrs. Bennet in her over-zealous efforts to get her daughters married without any due consideration for their feelings. Thus, in presenting Mr. Watts as the catalyst by which and the reason for which a loveless marriage is brought about, Jane Austen comments on the power of the wealthy man -- even a deformed one -- when it comes to the forcing of a poor and single woman into an advantageous but undesired marriage.

In this chapter, I have discussed some of the shorter pieces of work comprising Jane Austen's juvenilia (1787-93). These little tales or fragments of tales reveal Jane Austen's increasing skill in using a personage's chosen language as a means of characterisation. It must be noted, at this point, that Jane Austen was always concerned with realistic character portrayal. In the earlier "Frederic & Elfrida" and "Jack & Alice," her criticism of the unnatural protagonists of sentimental fiction had taken the route of uninhibited burlesque: her techniques of choral speech (in "Frederic & Elfrida") and extended dialogue (in "Jack & Alice") revealed the personages' unheroic limitations and foisted upon them personalities which were neither emotionally nor socially realistic. In this latter sense, Jane Austen was playing a double game of satirising the conventional sentimental heroine while using dialogue or the lack of it to present unrealistic ones of her own for compounded impact. By 1791, in "A Collection of Letters," however, Jane Austen had grown tired of mere exaggeration or diminution of sentimental figures; here the reader is given characters who are more in line with those whom one might meet in the real world. These personages are concerned with social issues of money, rank and marriage. Their language reveals their basic concern with life -- and one might add, the forseeable future. "Lesley Castle," like these letters, forms a bridge between Jane Austen's earlier emphasis on burlesque of the novel of sentiment and later preoccupation with realism. In "Lesley Castle," she uses a character's concepts on emotional and social issues, as expressed

through his or her chosen language, as a means of giving the character greater credibility as a person. But "Lesley Castle" is, nevertheless, an apprentice work; this is especially evinced in the inconsistent characterisation of a main character in the fragment, Charlotte Lutterell. Jane Austen displays greater control over characterisation in her next fragment, "The Three Sisters." Mary, Sophia and Georgiana are realistically and consistently portrayed as are Mr. Watts and Mrs. Stanhope. In "The Three Sisters," the author uses the personages' ideas on marriage and love as a means of distinguishing (for the reader) their different personalities; their language reveals their distinct and individual identities. By the time of "The Three Sisters," then, one can see that Jane Austen has come a long way from the production of mere burlesque versions of the sentimental protagonist. The personages in "The Three Sisters" are unlike those in her earlier juvenilia in that these earlier figures simply possess and display traits which are either contrary to or exaggerate those of the sentimental counterparts. Instead, the characters whom one meets with in "The Three Sisters" are involved in the social issues of love and marriage in such a way as would cause them to come across as (almost) life-like beings liable to be encountered in the real world. But the characterisation of these personages in Jane Austen's "The Three Sisters" is not flawless. For despite what they say about love and marriage, their words lack the force of emotion to be found in Jane Austen's later and more mature works.

Chapter 2: "Love and Freindship"

"Love and Freindship" was written in 1790. A mini epistolary novel, it burlesques the voluminous tomes of sentimental literature popular with the eighteenth century reading public. "Love and Freindship" opens with a letter from Isabel to her friend, Laura. In it, she entreats Laura to "give my Daughter a regular detail of the Misfortunes and Adventures of your Life" (76). Laura complies with Isabel's request and, from "Letter 3d" (77-8) through "Letter the 15th" (106-9), proceeds to tell Isabel's daughter, Marianne, "my unhappy Story" (77). Laura's misfortunes and adventures begin when she meets and marries Edward Lindsay (alias Talbot). Because of their lack of financial resources, they are forced to depend on the generosity of Edward's friends, Sophia and Augustus. Sophia and Augustus are very accommodating but they are also in pecuniary distress, and it is not long before Augustus is arrested for debt. Edward sets off for Newgate to see his friend and that is the last one sees of him and Augustus for a while. The women, who are thus separated from their husbands, are next seen in residence at Macdonald-Hall, the home of Sophia's relations, Macdonald and his daughter, Janetta. While staying at Macdonald-Hall, Laura and Sophia steal money from Macdonald and urge Janetta to elope with M'Kenzie, an unprincipled fortune-hunter. As a result of their actions, Macdonald expels Laura and Sophia from his house. While lamenting their ill luck, the two women witness the overturn of a phaeton carrying their husbands. Edward and Augustus die as a result of the accident and Sophia dies soon after, "'a Martyr to my greif for the loss of Augustus'" (102). After burying her friend, Laura makes her way to Edinburgh. While in the stagecoach, she discovers that, among others, she is seated with Edward's father, Sir Edward. On reaching Edinburgh, Sir Edward offers Laura four hundred pounds a year to live on. Laura, who accepts his generosity, then retires to "a romantic Village in the Highlands of Scotland, where . . . I can uninterrupted by unmeaning Visits, indulge in a melancholy solitude, my unceasing Lamentations for the Death of my Father, my Mother, my

Husband & my Freind" (108-9).

While set up as an epistolary novel, "Love and Freindship" is a narrative written after the termination of Laura's adventures, and divided into letters for convenience. Except for the initial exchange of letters between Laura and Isabel, there really is no evidence of any other mutual correspondence taking place. However, Jane Austen adapts the autobiographical narrative by adhering -- though not closely -- at least to some part of the pattern of letter writing. Each letter is signed off with "adeiu, Laura." Moreover, Laura's awareness that she is writing to Marianne is clearly evinced in her adoption of a more personal tone whenever she wishes to bring anything in particular to Marianne's attention; this is seen, for example, in an an excerpt from "Letter the 14th" (101-6):

> Pity & Surprise were strongly depictured in your Mother's Countenance, during the whole of my narration, but I am sorry to say, that to the eternal reproach of her Sensibility, the latter infinitely predominated. Nay, faultless as my Conduct had certainly been during the whole Course of my late Misfortunes & Adventures, she pretended to find fault with my Behaviour in many of the situations in which I had been placed. As I was sensible myself, that I had always behaved in a manner which reflected Honour on my Feelings & Refinement, I paid little attention to what she said, & desired her to satisfy my Curiosity by informing me how she came there, instead of wounding my spotless reputation with unjustifiable Reproaches. (104)

Laura's words reflect a simultaneously assertive and defensive attitude common throughout the whole of her narration. She writes that her conduct had been faultless "during the whole Course of my late Misfortunes & Adventures," yet she feels compelled to explain herself by saying that "I was sensible myself, that I had always behaved in a manner which reflected Honour on my Feelings & Refinement" (104). In her excuse (104), Laura is very careful to show that she has not merely behaved in a manner expressive of her values, but "had always" (104) conducted herself thus. The stress on the time factor, "always," is a match to a similar stress on the time factor, "whole," when she talks about the course of her adventures. In Laura's double references to time in these two sentences, she betrays an anxious desire that Marianne should not judge her conduct as Isabel had. Laura's second sentence seems to be more assertive than the third; but even the second sentence appears to pale in forcefulness when it is compared to the first. In the latter part of the first sentence, Laura had condemned

Isabel's sensibility to an "eternal reproach" because surprise, rather than pity, had "infinitely predominated" (104). Here, again, Laura seems to be occupied with the time factor. In contrast to the more finite connotations of "whole" and "always" in her description of her behaviour during the course of her adventures is her use of the words "eternal" and "infinitely" (104) in conjunction with her condemnation of Isabel's sensibility. Laura, who shows her consciousness of the time factor in her use of these words is, thus, displaying an offensive attitude in her first sentence which has been displaced by a more defensive one in her second. Laura's defensive, yet offensive, stance is also revealed in her use of the word "my" in that part of the third sentence which reads, "I had always behaved in a manner which reflected Honour on my Feelings & Refinement" (104). Here Laura is excusing her conduct because she has behaved in a manner worthy of her values. But Laura also exhibits a consciousness of what she considers her moral superiority in this last sentence. Her conviction that "my Feelings & Refinement" are of universal esteem, at least, among civilized [1] people, is registered in her dismissal of Isabel's disapproval: "I paid little attention to what she said" (104). In Laura's third sentence, then, she seems to be more assertive about her faultless conduct than defensive about it. The irony, of course, is this: the reader, who has followed Laura's narration of her "Misfortunes & Adventures" (104), knows that her character is flawed and that her values are far from being upheld by sensible people. Certainly, Laura realises that not every person embraces her code of conduct; and that is why she uses her letters to justify her behaviour before a (hopefully) neutral observer -- Marianne -- even though she believes hers to be a "spotless reputation" (104). This passage, then, shows Laura to be acutely sensible of the epistolary nature of her story. Laura's letters are also subjective in the extreme; it is this revelation of the individual perception of affairs that gives one a better idea of the writer's character. Laura's letters to Marianne present very personal views of the people whom she meets with in her adventures. But it must be acknowledged that these opinions are always accompanied with clear -- and, to a qualified extent, even fair -- presentations of the characters concerned. Thus, Laura's biased analyses of others do not impede the reader from

forming objective judgements of her friends and acquaintances. The dialogue in "Love and Freindship" also serves to give the reader a better idea of those involved in these conversations and speeches.

In "Frederic & Elfrida" and "Jack & Alice," Jane Austen had burlesqued the sentimental heroine by presenting the reader with anti-heroines. In "Love and Freindship," she satirises the conventional protagonist by introducing an exaggerated image of the heroine of sensibility -- Laura. Laura opens her narrative of the "Misfortunes and Adventures of . . . [her] Life" (76) with a listing of her own perfections in "Letter 3d" (77-8):

> lovely as I was the Graces of my Person were the least of my Perfections. Of every accomplishment accustomary to my sex, I was Mistress. When in the Convent, my progress had always exceeded my instructions, my Acquirements had been wonderfull for my Age, and I had shortly surpassed my Masters.
>
> In my Mind, every Virtue that could adorn it was centered; it was the Rendezvous of every good Quality & of every noble sentiment.
>
> A sensibility too tremblingly alive to every affliction of my Freinds, my Acquaintance and particularly to every affliction of my own, was my only fault, if a fault it could be called.

In this passage, the author follows the regular practice of romance writers in their introductions of their heroines: Jane Austen allows Laura to begin her story with a description of her own person. Like many conventional heroines, Laura is beautiful, accomplished, virtuous, and possessed of much sensibility. Thus, she is eminently suitable for the role of female protagonist. However, Laura's presumptions concerning her moral character cannot be given any credence. Even as early as this passage at the beginning of her narrative, one may spot signs of a flawed character. Laura writes that "lovely as I was the Graces of my Person were the least of my Perfections" (77-8). The implication here is that physical beauty is not as important as inner beauty; yet Laura is careful to insinuate that her outer beauty is of the perfect kind. What Laura possesses, then, is a false modesty with regard to "the Graces of my Person" (77-8). That she is actually more than a little interested in the question of a person's looks is best seen in her judgement of the "very plain" Bridget: "Nothing therefore could be expected of her--she could not be supposed to possess either exalted Ideas, Delicate Feelings or refined Sensibilities" (100-1). To Laura, then, an individual's physical beauty has much to do

with his or her character. In Laura's opinion of her sensibility, one has a more obvious sign of her false modesty. She calls her sensibility, which is "too tremblingly alive to every affliction of my Freinds, my Acquaintance and particularly to every affliction of my own . . . my only fault" (78). Here Laura affects modesty as she talks about her one character flaw. However, it is quite obvious that Laura thinks of herself as being perfect; and she quickly completes the rest of her sentence by questioning if her sensibility could be called a fault. Laura, then, is not perfect; and, in the process of her narration, she unconsciously reveals her many undesirable traits: she steals, she lies, and she promotes other socially irresponsible conduct -- and all in the name of virtuous sensibility. Laura's sensibility is sensibility run mad; this is figuratively shown in her delirious speech "on my Edward's death" (100):

> "Talk not to me of Phaetons (said I, raving in a frantic, incoherent manner)--Give me a violin--. I'll play to him & sooth him in his melancholy Hours--Beware ye gentle Nymphs of Cupid's Thunderbolts, avoid the piercing Shafts of Jupiter--Look at that Grove of Firs--I see a Leg of Mutton--They told me Edward was not Dead; but they deceived me--they took him for a Cucumber--" (100)

In her raving, Laura intermixes references to both supernatural and natural things of life and love. Her juxtaposition of such lofty thoughts as "'Cupid's Thunderbolts'" and "'Shafts of Jupiter'" with those more mundane ones of "'a Leg of Mutton'" and "'a Cucumber'" (100) gives one a notion of her inability to let go of that ideology of sensibility which has already begun to destroy her. For Laura has already given herself over to the self-serving instincts of sensibility that govern crime. For instance, Laura agrees to steal money from Macdonald because "it would be a proper treatment of so vile a Wretch" (96). She uses his lack of sensibility as an excuse for her behaviour: he has outraged her sensibility by arranging a marriage between a sensible man and his daughter; so she must administer the punishment -- she must "deprive him of money" (96). Laura's manner of speech reinforces and reflects what she actually does and says. Her unsettled mingling of the unnatural and common facets of existence also denotes her insanity in purposing to live the life of a fictional heroine in a real world.

In "Letter 3d" (77-8), Laura had made special mention of her "too tremblingly alive" (78) sensibility; it is a sensibility that she treasures and is very proud of. Laura's blind participation in the fashionable show of excessive sensibility leads her to base her opinions of others upon their capabilities of possessing such feelings and their abilities -- even skills -- of displaying them. That she does not see past a person's extrinsic qualities of physical beauty and display of sensibility when it comes to the assessment of character is evinced in her response to her new acquaintance, Sophia. Her reasons for calling Sophia "a real freind" (85) even before she has had a chance to find out more about the former are given below:

> Sophia was rather above the middle size; most elegantly formed. A soft Langour spread over her lovely features, but increased their Beauty.--It was the Charectarestic of her Mind--. She was all Sensibility and Feeling. We flew into each others arms & after having exchanged vows of mutual Friendship for the rest of our Lives, instantly unfolded to each other the most inward Secrets of our Hearts--. (85)

In her meetings with Augusta and Lady Dorothea, Laura quickly perceives that they are "of that inferior order of Beings with regard to Delicate feelings, tender Sentiments, and refined Sensibility" (84); yet she is oblivious to their inner worth and strength of character. Her contempt for the "very plain" (100) Bridget as she contemplates the latter's "good-tempered, civil & obliging" (101) nature is a reflection of her own moral debility. Her wilful engagement in and promotion of socially irresponsible behaviour, which is best seen in her part in the affair of Janetta's elopement with M'Kenzie, indicate her lack of personal integrity. For a person who thinks of herself as being perfectly virtuous, then, Laura is strangely lacking in the two most important qualities of character -- integrity and self-perception.

Like her friend, Laura, Sophia is given to the display of sensibility. She gives her sensibility as the reason for her refusal to visit her husband in jail even though her debts had helped to put him there: "'Oh! no, no, (exclaimed Sophia) I cannot go to Newgate; I shall not be able to support the sight of my Augustus in so cruel a confinement--my feelings are sufficiently shocked by the *recital*, of his Distress, but to behold it will overpower my Sensibility'" (89). Sophia's "'Oh! no, no'" (89) in this speech reflects her alarm and horror at (perhaps) being forced to see Augustus in prison. Her thoughts are not so much centered on

the unhappy situation of her husband as on her own emotions about it. Sophia has an excuse for her selfish behaviour of not lending her husband any moral support just when he needs it most: she says that "'my feelings are sufficiently shocked by the *recital*, of his Distress, but to behold it will overpower my Sensibility'" (89). Sophia's stress on her sensibility is heard again in the following speech:

> "Ah! . . . (cried Sophia) for pity's sake forbear recalling to my remembrance the unhappy situation of my imprisoned Husband. Alas, what would I not give to learn the fate of my Augustus! to know if he is still in Newgate, or if he is yet hung. But never shall I be able so far to conquer my tender sensibility as to enquire after him. Oh! do not I beseech you ever let me again hear you repeat his beloved name--. It affects me too deeply--. I cannot bear to hear him mentioned, it wounds my feelings." (97-8)

Sophia's words here, again, reveal her tendency to put herself before all others. She refers to Augustus as her beloved but she will not try "'to conquer . . . [her] tender sensibility . . . to enquire after him" (97-8). In other words, her exclamation of "'Alas, what would I not give to learn the fate of my Augustus'" (97) is false; in not being willing to sacrifice her sensibility, she shows that she is not prepared to give up all for the man whom she professes to love. There is also an element of irony when one compares what Sophia says in her second sentence to what she says in her fourth. In the latter sentence, even Augustus' name seems to be sacred to her; but in the earlier sentence, her wish to know "'if he is still in Newgate, or if he is yet hung'" (97) does not reflect her love for him or a concern for his emotional and physical well-being -- only an almost bystander-like curiosity with regard to his fate. Sophia's love for her husband, then, is not a selfless one. Even though she says that "'I die a Martyr to my greif for the loss of Augustus'" (102), her death is not so much the result of her sorrow on Augustus' decease, but a tribute to her excessive indulgence of that sensibility which, on an earlier occasion, had prevented her from visiting her spouse in jail. Sophia's constant reference to how *she* feels is again seen in her reaction to Macdonald when he discovers her stealing money from him and reproaches her for it: "The dignity of Sophia was wounded; 'Wretch (exclaimed she, hastily replacing the Bank-note in the Drawer) how darest thou to accuse me of an Act, of which the bare idea makes me blush?" (96) In this speech, Sophia tries to exonerate herself by displacing

her guilt on the nobler Macdonald and degrading him to the level of a "'Wretch'" (96). Her use of the more formal "'darest'" and "'thou'" (96) in place of the more common "dare" and "you" also shows her resorting to the use of elevated speech as a means of asserting her moral superiority. Sophia's speech betrays her knowledge of her guilt -- but she does not apologise. Nor is she concerned with how her kindly kinsman Macdonald must feel. Her words -- especially the twice spoken "'me'" (96) -- quickly reveal that she is only interested in her own feelings, and her sensibility is sorely wounded at the thought of being accused of theft (even if she has stooped so low as to steal). Thus Sophia's predominating characteristic, a self serving sensibility, is also the moulding force of her speech.

Like her friend, Laura, Sophia constantly uses as her excuse for her irresponsible behaviour her "'tender sensibility'" (97). Like Laura, too, she frequently loses her senses -- but she does not run mad; she only swoons. In "Letter the 14th" (101-6), Marianne is told that Sophia dies from the effects of her two-hour long swoon on Edward's death (101). The implication in Jane Austen's presentation of this event is that the excessive indulgence of sensibility is incompatible with life in the real world. The reverse of this statement also holds true. One can give way to the luxury of uncontrolled emotion only if one is prepared to exist in a fictional setting of the imagination. When one first meets Sophia, she already exhibits a tendency to retreat into a romantic dream world of her own making (87); it is a habit which she never really outgrows. Sophia's inevitable and untimely death is the result of her inability to adjust to and in a real world. Bereft of help from both friends and family after her expulsion from Macdonald-Hall, Sophia deals with her problems by sinking into one final long swoon. Sophia's last speech before her decease is printed below:

> "My beloved Laura (said she to me a few Hours before she died) take warning from my unhappy End & avoid the imprudent conduct which has occasioned it . . beware of fainting-fits . . Though at the time they may be refreshing & Agreable yet beleive me they will in the end, if too often repeated & at improper seasons, prove destructive to your Constitution . . . . . My fate will teach you this . . I die a Martyr to my greif for the loss of Augustus . . . . One fatal swoon has cost me my Life . . . . Beware of swoons Dear Laura . . . A frenzy fit is not one quarter so pernicious; it is an exercise to the Body & if not too violent, is I dare say conducive to Health in its consequences--Run mad as often as you chuse; but do not faint--" (102)

In her speech, Sophia reveals that she has learnt too late that too much fainting is not conducive to good health; however she still does not show any change of attitude in her approach to life and its ups and downs. Thus, while on the one hand she gives Laura good advice -- "'do not faint'" -- on the other, she also gives her friend bad counsel -- "'Run mad as often as you chuse'" (102). In "Letter the 14th" (101-6), Laura tells the reader that these words were spoken just a few hours before Sophia's death. It is, therefore, quite natural to assume that Sophia's breathing might be rather belaboured at this time both from her illness and her impending death. Sophia's difficulty in breathing normally is reflected in Jane Austen's presentation of her speech. The use of two or more periods as a means of separating the sentences or phrases in this speech gives the effect of her inconsistent breathing. The reader can almost feel -- perhaps even see -- Sophia taking what time may be necessary to draw enough breath in order to speak again. Thus Sophia's speech is not only significant for what it shows to the reader of her way of thinking; it is also important for what it exhibits of Jane Austen's early ability to handle dialogue in a manner more suggestive of the speaker's physical and emotional states.

Jane Austen's Edward is another sentimental figure in "Love and Freindship." Like his wife, Laura, Edward's ultimate goal is to live the life of a fictional protagonist -- and so he rebels against his father's wishes for disobedience's sake (81). Edward's speech reveals his deep involvement with his romantic dream; the following excerpt reads like a mini romance:

> "My Father, seduced by the false glare of Fortune and the Deluding Pomp of Title, insisted on my giving my hand to Lady Dorothea. No never exclaimed I. Lady Dorothea is lovely and Engaging; I prefer no woman to her; but know Sir [Edward], that I scorn to marry her in compliance with your wishes. No! Never shall it be said that I obliged my Father,"
>
> .....
>
> "I mounted my Horse and followed by my faithful William set forwards for my Aunts."
>
> .....
>
> "After having wandered some time on the Banks of the Uske without knowing which way to go, I began to lament my cruel Destiny in the bitterest and most pathetic Manner. It was now perfectly dark, not a single Star was there to direct my steps, and I know not what might have befallen me had I not at length discerned thro' the solemn Gloom that surrounded me a distant Light, which as I approached it, I discovered to be the chearfull Blaze of your fire. Impelled by the combination of Misfortunes under which I laboured, namely Fear, Cold and Hunger I hesitated not to

> ask admittance which at length I have gained; and now my Adorable Laura . . . when may I hope to receive that reward of all the painfull sufferings I have undergone during the course of my Attachment to you, to which I have ever aspired? Oh! when will you reward me with Yourself?" (81-2)

Edward's detailed relation of his adventures sounds like a tale taken out of the romance tradition. But, like "Love and Freindship" itself, his story is a compressed -- and, therefore, burlesqued -- imitation of the novel of sensibility.

Edward's disregard for the realities of life is merely hinted at in his wanton rebellion against his father's wishes; his fanciful attitude towards life is, perhaps, best seen in his exchange of words with his more down-to-earth sister, Augusta:

> "Edward . . . . I am not without apprehensions of your being shortly obliged to degrade yourself in your own eyes by seeking a Support for your Wife in the Generosity of Sir Edward."
>
> "Never, never Augusta will I so demean myself. (said Edward). Support! What Support will Laura want which she can receive from him?"
>
> "Only those very insignificant ones of Victuals and Drink." (answered she.)
>
> "Victuals and Drink! (replied my Husband in a most nobly contemtuous Manner) and dost thou then imagine that there is no other support for an exalted Mind (such as is my Laura's) than the mean and indelicate employment of Eating and Drinking?"
>
> "None that I know of, so efficacious." (returned Ausgusta).
>
> "And did you then never feel the pleasing Pangs of Love, Augusta? (replied my Edward). Does it appear impossible to your vile and corrupted Palate, to exist on Love? Can you not conceive the Luxury of living in every Distress that Poverty can inflict, with the object of your tenderest Affection?"
>
> "You are too ridiculous (said Augusta) to argue with; . . ." (83-4)

This dialogue with Augusta as well as Edward's other speeches show how much Edward values his sensibility. It also reveals the immature stand he takes against socially responsible behaviour: he (irrationally) disobeys his father and disregards the physical needs of his wife. Stuart Tave says that "language is a ***given reality*** that presents choices and so tests the powers and the life of its users by their ability to make the right choices;" [2] Edward's dialogue with Augusta shows one that he fails miserably in this test by choosing to live his life according to the pattern of fiction.

Augusta Lindsay is as realistic in her outlook as her brother is not. Her conversation with Edward (83-4) reveals her pragmatic approach to life. Man must eat and drink in order to exist, she says; it is a truth which Laura finally comes to acknowledge in her final letter to

Marianne (106-9). In Laura's description of Augusta, she complains about her sister-in-law's reserve and her lack of affectionate display towards her. From Augusta's answer to Edward's suggestion that man can live on love alone, one may surmise that she considers such an excessive show of emotion towards one whom she has never met before as being as false and affected as Edward's romantic notion of "'the Luxury of living in every Distress that Poverty can inflict, with the object of . . . [one's] tenderest Affections'" (84). Thus it is no wonder that Augusta should speak and behave as she does. Augusta's scorn of the cult of sensibility is revealed in her dialogue with her brother. Her witty but rather cutting words betray her exasperation with him and his silly fantasies. It is an exasperation which extends into an impatience with all who would profess to live the life of a fictional protagonist within a real world.

In "Love and Freindship," Jane Austen uses a persona who considers a person worthy of her friendship and affection only if he or she shows signs of sensibility; those who are not in possession of it are merely objects of contempt in her eyes. It is, perhaps, due to the author's choice of narrator that she separates her personages in the same way -- that is, according to their show of sensibility. For it will be noticed that those who indulge in the excesses of emotional display are also those who are socially irresponsible and corrupt, whereas those who are not given to the exhibition of delicate feelings are also those who are responsible and possess integrity. The characters in "Love and Freindship," then, are starkly differentiated as black or white; it is a distinction which carries through to their interaction with one another.

"Love and Freindship" is a work which satirises some of the more unbelievable aspects of the novel of sensibility. Within its boundaries, characters are used to burlesque such diverse literary conventions as the sudden and rapid discovery of near connections (91-2) and the confused and naive comparison of illegitimacy with good blood (106). But "Love and Freindship" is also more than a playful take-off on the novel of sensibility: its theme is social responsibility, and its dialogue criticises the sentimental excesses of figures like Laura, Sophia and Edward. Jane Austen's presentation of Augusta and Sir Edward is a step forward for her

when one considers her growing preoccupation with the portrayal of realistic characters. For the author of "Love and Freindship," realistic characterisation also meant consistent characterisation; this goal is achieved both through her description of those personages concerned and her handling of their dialogue.

Chapter 3: "Catharine or the Bower"

"Catharine or the Bower" perhaps stands as Jane Austen's most advanced piece of juvenile work. In it, Jane Austen pays special attention to the tone and diction of the characters' chosen language as a means of developing, differentiating and revealing their personalities. Written in 1793, "Catharine" tells the story of a young girl, by the name of Catharine Percival, who lives with her strict though loving aunt, Mrs. Percival. The author begins "Catharine" by giving a description of the heroine's character and disposition. The reader is told that Catharine is partly of a sentimental and romantic turn of mind who, when upset, "was firmly persuaded that her Bower [which she had built together with her childhood friends, Cecilia and Mary Wynne] alone could restore her to herself" (193). Three events stand out in "Catharine." First, Catharine is relieved of her boredom and loneliness after the departure of the Wynne girls by the visit of some distant relatives, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley and their daughter, Camilla. Catharine immediately attaches herself to Camilla in the hopes of finding in the latter an intelligent friend to whom she can relate. However she is soon disappointed in the vacant Camilla. Secondly, during the Stanleys' stay at the Percival home, all are invited by the Dudleys next door to a ball. Unfortunately, Catharine develops a toothache on the day of the ball and is unable to attend it. The others have already left without her when she starts to feel much better and decides to go to the ball after all. The arrival and departure of Edward Stanley constitutes the third event contained in this fragmentary work. Just as Catharine prepares to leave the house for the ball, Edward suddenly arrives. He accompanies her to the Dudleys' and, in so doing, incurs the wrath of her aunt and Mr. and Mrs. Dudley. On the day after the ball, Mrs. Percival informs Mr. Stanley that "it was a rule with her never to admit a young Man into her house as a visitor for any length of time" (227); she ends their conversation by saying, "'I beg you will send your Son away immediately'" (228). Mr. Stanley complies with her wishes by requiring Edward to leave them the next day.

However, during his one day with Catharine at Chetwynde, Edward, who has noticed that Mrs. Percival is always concerned with Catharine's conduct among men, takes great pleasure in arousing the jealous fears of her aunt. Edward pays Catharine the greatest attention; and on espying Mrs. Percival's approach toward the bower where they are, he even seizes the heroine's hand and kisses it with much passion before making a hasty exit. Edward's behaviour not only incurs Mrs. Percival's anger but also awakens feelings of attachment towards him on Catharine's part. However, there is no possibility of a relationship developing between them for the present because Edward is to leave Chetwynde the next day. The other Stanleys depart some time later and a correspondence commences between Catharine and Camilla. The last event in this unfinished story is Mrs. Percival's invitation to Miss Dudley to join both her and her niece for an evening's outing to the theatre in Exeter, "when a new difficulty arose, from the necessity of having some Gentleman to attend them" (240).

Near the beginning of "Catharine," Jane Austen describes her heroine as a person who is well read in modern history as well as books of a lighter kind (198). Catharine (or Kitty) is therefore delighted to hear that Camilla professes a love for books and is naturally eager to begin "questioning her new Acquaintance on the subject" (198). Their conversation on the merits of Mrs. Smith's novels is given below:

> "You have read Mrs Smith's Novels, I suppose?" said . . . [Catharine] to her Companion--. "Oh! Yes, replied . . . [Camilla], and I am quite delighted with them--They are the sweetest things in the world--" "And which do you prefer of them?" "Oh! dear, I think there is no comparison between them--Emmeline is *so much* better than any of the others--" "Many people think so, I know; but there does not appear so great a disproportion in their Merits to *me*; do you think it is better written?" "Oh! I do not know anything about *that*--but it is better in *everything*--Besides, Ethelinde is so long--" "That is a very common Objection I believe, said Kitty, but for my own part, if a book is well written, I always find it too short." "So do I, only I get tired of it before it is finished." "But did not you find the story of Ethelinde very interesting? And the Descriptions of Grasmere, are not the[y] Beautiful?" "Oh! I missed them all, because I was in such a hurry to know the end of it--Then from an easy transition she added, We are going to the Lakes this Autumn, and I am quite Mad with Joy; Sir Henry Devereux has promised to go with us, and that will make it so pleasant, you know--" (199)

In this dialogue, Catharine, true to her objective, asks Camilla for her opinions on such lighter reading as is embodied in Mrs. Smith's novels. Catharine's questions are couched in a manner

which imply her respect for Camilla's views. Although she does not agree with Camilla that there is "'no comparison'" (199) between *Emmeline* and Mrs. Smith's other novels, she is prepared to listen to Camilla's defence of her own position. However Camilla's dialogue on Mrs. Smith's novels is too general in nature to tell Catharine anything of her new acquaintance's point of view. Indeed, what the reader, like Catharine, gathers from Camilla's talk about Mrs. Smith's novels is that she does not have a point of view at all, and probably has not even read Mrs. Smith's novels. Camilla defends *Emmeline* enthusiastically; her declaration that "'Emmeline is *so much* better than any of the others'" (199) is made even more forceful by the author's use of italics. Yet Camilla cannot say whether "'it is better written'" (199) than the rest of Mrs. Smith's novels. She confesses, instead, that "'I do not know anything about *that*'" (199) -- implying that "'*that*'" is really of no consequence in judging the merits of *Emmeline*. In their dialogue, Camilla had brought up the objection that "'Ethelinde is so long'" (199). Catharine concedes that "'That is a very common Objection'" but goes on to counter that "'for my own part, if a book is well written, I always find it too short'" (199). In answer to Catharine's comment, Camilla says: "'So do I, only I get tired of it before it is finished'" (199). Camilla's reply, of course, makes no sense; however it does show that she does not think before she speaks nor while she reads. Indeed, as one discovers a little later, she can hardly be suspected of possessing the understanding of a thinking mind. In Jane Austen's description of Camilla, she had commented that "She professed a love of Books without Reading" (198); this statement is amply confirmed in Camilla's dialogue on Mrs. Smith's novels. Camilla's "'easy transition'" (199) from a discussion of Mrs. Smith's books to one of her coming holiday is an early sign of her preoccupation with fashionable parties; it may also be taken as another indication of her inability to make or participate in any dialogue calling for the exercise of an educated or informed mind. Camilla's conversation reveals "a Mind totally devoid either of Taste or Judgement" (198); and this is precisely what Catharine discovers to be the case: "She could scarcely resolve what to think of her new Acquaintance; She appeared to be . . . equally devoid of Taste and Information" (200).

Catharine's conversation with Camilla shows her to be fair and open to the latter's views. Her unwillingness to judge Camilla too hastily is based on her being both "at once desirous of doing Miss Stanley justice, and of having her own Wishes in her answered" (200). Catharine's determination "to suspend all Judgement for some time" (200) is a reflection both of her own feelings of loneliness and of her desire for a compatible companion. Camilla, however, proves to be a disappointment to Catharine; and the author writes that Camilla cannot in any real way "make amends for the loss of Cecilia & Mary Wynne" (198).

Catharine's later conversations with Camilla show that she has given up on her new acquaintance. Part of one of these exchanges between them is as follows:

> Camilla eager to communicate all she felt to some one who would attend to her . . . immediately began--"Well, did you ever know anything so delightful as this? But it always is so; I never go to a Ball in my Life but what something or other happens unexpectedly that is quite charming!"
>
> "A Ball replied Kitty, seems to be a most eventful thing to you--"
>
> "Oh! Lord, it is indeed--But only think of my brother's returning so suddenly--And how shocking a thing it is that has brought him over! I never heard anything so dreadful--!"
>
> "What is it pray that has occasioned his leaving France? I am sorry to find that it is a melancholy event."
>
> "Oh! it is beyond anything you can conceive! His favourite Hunter who was turned out in the park on his going abroad, somehow or other fell ill--No, I beleive it was an accident, but however it was something or other, or else it was something else, and so they sent an Express immediately to Lyons where my Brother was, for they knew that he valued this Mare more than anything else in the World besides; and so my Brother set off directly for England, and without packing up another Coat; I am quite angry with him about it; it was so shocking you know to come away without a change of Cloathes--"
>
> "Why indeed said Kitty, it seems to have been a very shocking affair from beginning to end."
>
> "Oh! it is beyond anything You can conceive! I would rather have had *anything* happen than that he should have lossed that mare."
>
> "Except his coming away without another coat."
>
> "Oh! yes, that has vexed me more than you can imagine.--" (221-2)

In this passage, Catharine responds to Camilla's mindless chatter with irony. This is seen, for example, in Catharine's answers to the excited Camilla's communication of the "'shocking'" affair which had brought Edward to England "'without a change of Cloathes'" (222). Here Camilla's use of the word, "'shocking'" (222) reminds one of Catherine's use of it in *Northanger Abbey* when she speaks of the new gothic novel to be published in London: "'I have heard that something very shocking indeed, will soon come out of London.'" [1] Like

Catherine, Camilla uses the word in an inexact, hyperbolical sense. And like Henry, who tries to refine Catherine's language with irony, Catharine attempts to bring Camilla's attention to her errors in expression with the same. It must be noted, at this point, that Catharine is (generally) a rather perceptive individual and can, therefore, read her acquaintance's character quite clearly. Her witty remarks show her to be essentially using her own more considerable mental powers as a means of deliberately toying with Camilla and drawing the latter out to reveal her for the fool that she really is. In Catharine's comments of "'Why indeed . . . it seems to have been a very shocking affair from beginning to end'" and "'Except his coming away without another coat'" (222), one sees how she uses Camilla as a butt for her own silent laughter. One must sympathise with Catharine because Camilla must certainly have tried her acquaintance's patience with her frivolous reasons for Edward's sudden return to England and her silly chatter on his failure to bring with him a coat and a change of clothes (222). Camilla's respective replies of "'Oh! it is beyond anything You can conceive!'" and "'Oh! yes, that has vexed me more than you can imagine'" (222) show one that Catharine has correctly estimated her subject's idiosyncracies -- Catharine has, therefore, also successfully ridiculed Camilla in the reader's eyes. But Catharine's treatment of the vacant Camilla does not detract from one's liking for her. This is due, in part, to the fact that though Catharine uses Camilla as an object for her laughter, she does so without any malice; for Catharine harbours no hatred for her acquaintance and, indeed, she apologises humbly and profusely when she learns that she has hurt Camilla's feelings in beginning a dance with Edward (226). Two other factors contribute to one's continuing sympathy for the heroine. First, Camilla, with her thoughts perpetually centered on fashionable clothing and outings, functions quite naturally as the fool in this story; even while being ridiculed, she does not realise it and can, therefore, feel no slight from these remarks. Secondly, the reader, who quite often feels as exasperated with Camilla, as Catharine herself does, can only vent his or her own impatience with the former vicariously -- that is, through Catharine -- and, thus, is quite content to allow the heroine's "abuse" of Camilla's mind. Catharine's conversational game with Camilla, then, reveals their different mental

faculties: while the former comes across as an intelligent young lady, the latter reveals herself to be a silly and uninformed girl.

Most of Jane Austen's description of Catharine reveals her to be a sensible girl who possesses and displays good humour and patience under disappointment (208). Catharine's resignation in the matter of her toothache and the ball is based on an ability to consider her situation carefully rather than on a general lack of spirits or apathy. Her interaction with Edward (216-9), among others, shows that she is full of life: Jane Austen herself comments that "Kitty, tho' perhaps not authorized to address . . . [Edward] with so much familiarity on so short an acquaintance, could not forbear indulging the natural Unreserve & Vivacity of her own Disposition, in speaking to him" (216). Catharine's lively personality resurfaces in her dialogue with Mrs. Percival:

> "Well; *this* is beyond anything I could have supposed. ***Profligate*** as I ***knew*** you to be, I was not prepared for such a sight. . . . But I plainly see that every thing is going to sixes & sevens and all order will soon be at an end throughout the Kingdom." [said Mrs. Percival]
>
> "Not however Ma'am the sooner, I hope, from any conduct of mine, said Catherine in a tone of great humility, for upon my honour I have done nothing this evening that can contribute to overthrow the establishment of the kingdom."
>
> "You are Mistaken Child, replied she; the welfare of every Nation depends upon the virtue of it's individuals, and any one who offends in so gross a manner against decorum & propriety is certainly hastening it's ruin. You have been giving a bad example to the World, and the World is but too well disposed to receive such."
>
> "Pardon me Madam, said her Neice; but I *can* have given an Example only to *You*, for You alone have seen the offence. Upon my word however there is no danger to fear from what I have done; . . ." (232-3)

In this exchange, Mrs. Percival scolds Catharine severely for walking alone in the garden with Edward and for allowing him to kiss her hand. However, while Catharine replies "in a tone of great humility" that "'upon my honour I have done nothing this evening that can contribute to overthrow the establishment of the kingdom'" (232), there is, also, in her answer, an ironic overtone; for Catharine recognises the rather unfair and even ridiculous nature of her aunt's accusation that "'You have been giving a bad example to the World,'" and this is evinced in her logical retort of "'I *can* have given an Example only to *You*, for You alone have seen the offence'" (233). Catharine's dialogue with Mrs. Percival, then, reveals her spirited character; it is a nature which is founded both on emotion and logic.

Early in the story of "Catharine," Jane Austen had written that Mrs. Percival laboured under a "constant apprehension of her [niece] marrying imprudently if she were allowed the opportunity of choosing" (196). Thus it comes as no surprise that she should be so upset with what she sees as Catharine's encouragement of Edward's attentions at the bower. Yet Mrs. Percival's accusations are certainly too harsh in this case; for as Catharine tells her later, "'Mr Stanley's behaviour has given me as much surprise, as it has done to You'" (233). It will be noticed that Mrs. Percival exaggerates the significance of the situation at hand by implying that it would contribute to the end of the kingdom. This charge is, of course, quite absurd; since as Catharine has pointed out, only Mrs. Percival has seen what had happened and she was not likely to be influenced by it. But Mrs. Percival's relation of this instance of Catharine's conduct with her overall belief that "'every thing is going to sixes & sevens'" (232) is not an uncommon thing for her to do. Jane Austen had reported that "Mrs P, who was firmly of opinion that the whole race of Mankind were degenerating, said that for her part, Everything she beleived was going to rack and ruin, all order was destroyed over the face of the World" (200). Mrs. Percival, then, is not exaggerating merely for the benefit of its effects on Catharine when she complains of her niece's "'bad example to the World'" (233); instead, she is in real earnest in this harangue that "'all order will soon be at an end throughout the Kingdom'" (232). It must be admitted, however, that Mrs. Percival is given to overstatement: she calls Catharine a "'*Profligate*'" when, as the author has shown, Catharine is far from being dissolute or corrupt. Mrs. Percival's prescription for Catharine's "salvation" -- "'if you are really sorry for it, and your future life is a life of penitence and reformation perhaps you may be forgiven'" (232) -- reflects, again, her tendency to blow a relatively small issue out of proportion. As Catharine's foster parent, Mrs. Percival is supposed to possess greater sense than her niece; but, in this case, as in her irrational fear for her health, Catharine shows more common sense than Mrs. Percival. Indeed one might say that Mrs. Percival's anxiety as to the health of the kingdom is a reflection of her own hypochondria (233). Mrs. Percival, then, may be said to serve, like Camilla, as a kind of foil for Catharine when one considers their very

distinct ways of thinking with respect to the contribution of degenerative influences to an already debilitated world.

In Mrs. Percival's tirade on Catharine's behaviour, she had used the phrase, "'sixes & sevens'" (232). It is a saying which Catharine herself picks up in her own silent harangue (236-7) on the "vanity of Young Women, or the unaccountable conduct of Young Men" (239). Catharine's thoughts on Edward's departure are given below:

> "And this, thought she to herself blushing with anger at her own folly, this is the affection for me of which I was so certain. Oh! what a silly Thing is woman! How vain, how unreasonable! To suppose that a young Man would be seriously attached in the course of four & twenty hours, to a Girl who has nothing to recommend her but a good pair of eyes! And he is really gone! Gone perhaps without bestowing a thought on me! Oh! why was not I up by eight o'clock? But it is a proper punishment for my Lazyness & Folly, and I am heartily glad of it. I deserve it all, & ten times more for such insufferable vanity. It will at least be of service to me in that respect; it will teach me in future *not* to think Every Body is in love with me. Yet I *should* like to have seen him before he went, for perhaps it may be many Years before we meet again. By his Manner of leaving us however, he seems to have been perfectly indifferent about it. How very odd, that he should go without giving us Notice of it, or taking leave of any one! But it is just like a Young Man, governed by the whim of the moment, or actuated merely by the love of doing anything oddly! Unaccountable Beings indeed! And Young Women are equally ridiculous! I shall soon begin to think like my Aunt that everything is going to sixes & sevens, and that the whole race of Mankind are degenerating." (236-7)

In the latter part of this passage, Catharine seems to be thinking in a manner which is reminiscent of the way in which her aunt would speak. It will be noticed that when Mrs. Percival scolds her niece, she does not simply keep to the issue at hand -- that is, that Catharine had taken the liberty of walking alone with Edward in the garden and had allowed him to kiss her hand; for aside from her tirade concerning the fall of the kingdom, she brings up the issue of her niece's education:

> "And this is the reward for all the cares I have taken in your Education; . . . All I wished for, was to breed you up virtuously; I never wanted you to play upon the Harpsichord, or draw better than any one else; but I had hoped to see you respectable and good; to see you able & willing to give an example of Modesty and Virtue to the Young people here abouts. I bought you Blair's Sermons, and Coelebs in Search of a Wife, I gave you the key to my own Library, and borrowed a great many good books of my Neighbours for you, all to this purpose." (232)

On the surface, Mrs. Percival's speech on Catharine's education does not seem to have anything to do with the heroine's "crime." Yet it is pertinent to the situation at hand. As

information about the heroine's upbringing and education, it questions the possibility of a connection between the accused's educational background and her present behaviour. In Catharine's contemplation of Edward's departure, she displays, like her aunt in the latter's speech on her behaviour, a propensity to pull in matter not immediately connected with the event: for the reader is also given her thoughts on the effect of "'a good pair of eyes'" (236) on Edward's emotional response with regard to her. However, the protagonist's association of Edward's affection for her with her looks as well as "'my Lazyness & Folly'" with his being "'really gone! Gone perhaps without bestowing a thought on me'" (236) may be seen as a realistic portrayal of a young girl who is half in love and feeling dismayed at the departure of her male friend. Catharine also seems to pick up her aunt's habit of taking one point and generalising upon or relating it to a wider concept. In her harangue on Catharine's conduct, one has seen how Mrs. Percival relates her niece's behaviour with the imminent ruin of the kingdom. Now, as one sees in Catharine's own mental speech, she takes this instance of Edward's conduct and her feelings toward it and generalises upon it:

> "And this . . . this is the affection for me of which I was so certain. Oh! what a silly Thing is Woman! How vain, how unreasonable! To suppose that a young Man would be seriously attached in the course of four & twenty hours, to a Girl who has nothing to recommend her but a pair of good eyes! . . . How very odd, that he should go without giving us Notice of it, or taking leave of any one! But it is just like a Young Man, governed by the whim of the moment, or actuated merely by the love of doing anything oddly! Unaccountable Beings indeed! And Young Women are equally ridiculous!" (236)

Catharine, then, relates Edward's behaviour and her own affection for him to a theory respecting what she perceives as the general nature of young men and women. Her thoughts on young adults resemble her aunt's talk of the kingdom and its fall in her method of reasoning. In her mental tirade, Catharine also gives some thought to her loss of not seeing Edward before he left: "'Oh! Why was not I up by eight o'clock? But it is a proper punishment for my Lazyness & Folly, and I am heartily glad of it. I deserve it all, & ten times more for such insufferable vanity. It will at least be of service to me in that respect; it will teach me in future *not* to think Every Body is in love with me'" (236). Catharine's thoughts on her own punishment, and especially her opinion that she deserves "'ten times more for such insufferable

vanity'" (236), again reveal the influence of an aunt who thinks that "'if you are really sorry for it, and your future life is a life of penitence and reformation perhaps you may be forgiven'" for your encouragement of Edward's attentions. In Catharine's silent speech, then, she seems to have adopted her aunt's propensity for handing out punishments exceeding the crime. The tone and rhythm of the heroine's rebuke of herself also approximate those of her aunt's tirade. In fact, Catharine knows that she is beginning to sound and think like her aunt: "'I shall soon begin to think like my Aunt that everything is going to sixes & sevens, and that the whole race of Mankind are degenerating'" (236-7). Catharine's mental scolding of herself, thus, reveals her capacity for picking up the essential qualities of another's way of speaking.

In Jane Austen's introduction of her heroine, she had mentioned that Catharine's "imagination was warm, and in her Freindships, as well as in the whole tenure of her Mind, she was enthousiastic" (193). This warmth or quickness of Catharine's imagination is best depicted in the protagonist's thoughts on Edward and his father:

> "said Catherine to herself, . . . can [Edward] Stanley really be averse to leaving England for *my sake* only? "His plans interrupted." And what indeed can his plans be, but towards Marriage? Yet *so soon* to be in love with me!--But it is the effect perhaps only of a warmth of heart which to *me* is the highest recommendation in any one. A Heart disposed to love--And such under the appearance of so much Gaity and Inattention, is Stanly's! Oh! how much does it endear him to me! But he is gone--Gone perhaps for Years--Obliged to tear himself from what he most loves, his happiness is sacrificed to the vanity of his Father! In what anguish he must have left the house! Unable to see me, or to bid me adieu, while I, senseless wretch, was daring to sleep. This, then explained his leaving us at such a time of day--. He could not trust himself to see me--. Charming Young Man! How much must you have suffered! I *knew* that it was impossible for one so elegant, and so well bred, to leave my Family in such a Manner, but for a Motive like this unanswerable." (238-9)

In Catharine's dialogues with Camilla and Mrs. Percival, the reader has seen that the heroine can be quite clever and clear headed. And while she can be rather girlish, as is evinced in her mental tirade on Edward's sudden and early departure, she is, yet, not irrational. However Catharine seems to have lost her ability to reason lucidly in this monologue. From Catharine's discussion of Mrs. Smith's books, one might infer that the heroine was fond of reading many sentimental novels (198-9); unfortunately, in this instance, she seems to have adopted and latched onto the practice of sensibility common to the protagonists found in these works. Her

reflections on Edward and his father remind one of the stock sentiment regarding the villainous parent who opposes the union of his or her child with the one whom his or her son or daughter loves. Catharine's manner of speech here echoes the alarmist attitudes of sentimental protagonists; her warm imagination and emotions are clearly betrayed in her exclamatory remarks on Edward's situation and conduct. Catharine's quickness to form her opinions on what one might call circumstantial evidence with respect to Edward and his father stands in stark contrast to her earlier postponement of judgement concerning Camilla. In Camilla's case, she had considered the matter in hand in a more logical manner; she had looked at the facts and carefully analysed them before drawing the conclusion that Camilla could not be her equal in mentality. With Edward, however, Catharine seems to have lost all control of herself at this point; her natural liking for him, which is increased by Camilla's assurance that "'he is excessively in love with you to be sure'" (238), takes full precedence over reason and causes her to allow sensibility and imagination to overrule logic. In her reference to Edward's affectionate heart "'under the appearance of so much Gaity and Inattention'" (238), she even goes so far as to forget that Edward himself had "owned that all his intentions had been to frighten her Aunt by pretending an affection for *her*" (234). Here, then, Catharine seems to be thinking along the lines of the situations confronted by the hero and heroine of romance -- and one cannot help but suspect that her reading of these popular novels has influenced her in this matter; it is a phenomenon which occurs again with one of Jane Austen's heroines in one of her later works -- *Northanger Abbey*. Like Catharine Percival, Catherine Morland is a young girl who loves reading sentimental (gothic) novels; and like her earlier counterpart, Catherine falls into the same -- though grosser -- error of attributing to her beloved's father, atrocities which the latter could never have committed. However, while Catherine Morland's mistakes are quite in keeping with her naive and gullible nature, Catharine Percival's suppositions are inconsistent with her generally perceptive character. In "Catharine," Jane Austen has used the heroine's love for her bower as a representation of her sensibility; however, this aspect of Catharine is not fully explored until one comes to her reflections on Edward and his father -- and then, this

part of her character comes too suddenly and explosively. As Douglas Bush says,

> Kitty seems to be a real person, although the moments do not add up to entire consistency: for instance, the sometimes naive and credulous girl could hardly take the . . . frame [of] that reply to her aunt about the overthrow of the establishment. . . . Kitty makes us think especially of Catherine Morland, even if Edward is no Henry Tilney; and she sees through Camilla's pretensions as Catherine was to see through Isabella Thorpe. [3]

Catharine's foil, Camilla, is as flighty and uninformed as she is herself intelligent and well-read. Camilla, as one has seen, speaks without thinking; every person to her is "either the sweetest Creature in the world, and one of whom she was doatingly fond, or horrid, shocking and not fit to be seen" (202). Camilla's speech pattern reveals the quality of her mind. Her talk with Catharine about the Wynnes exposes her lack of understanding concerning the social issues of marriage and poverty (202-6). Camilla's inability to sympathise with the Miss Wynnes may perhaps be attributed to the fact that, unlike Catharine, she is not their personal friend. However one could also say that her unsympathetic attitude is due to her possession of "an Understanding unimproved by reading and a Mind totally devoid either of Taste or Judgement" (198). For while like Catharine she has been fortunate enough never to have been subjected to the rigours and indignity of poverty, yet unlike Catharine, she has also an uneducated mind and, hence, is incapable of comprehending and appreciating the hardships experienced by the Wynnes. Catharine's observation, "'I beleive you would think very differently *then*,'" with regard to Camilla's romanticised version of Cecilia's plight (205), may, therefore, be taken as a very apt comment on Jane Austen's part as a means of revealing the two girls' very different characters: Catharine, with her understanding of the social ills of poverty, sees Cecilia's voyage to Bengal as "'a punishment that needs no other to make it very severe'" (205); whereas Camilla, whose "Ideas were [all] towards the Elegance of her appearance, the fashion of her dress, and the Admiration she wished them to excite" (198), thinks "'it very good fun if I were as poor'" and apprehends "'no hardship in all that'" (205): "'Well, I cannot conceive the hardship of going out in a very agreeable Manner with two or three sweet Girls for Companions, having a delightful voyage to Bengal or Barbadoes or wherever it is, and being married soon after one's arrival to a very charming Man immensely rich--. I see no hardship in

all that'" (205).

Just as Catharine Percival is a prototype for Catherine Morland, Camilla Stanley is an early version of Isabella Thorpe. Like the later Isabella, Camilla is selfish and vain (198); these traits are made apparent in her conversations with Catharine. Camilla's dialogues with Catharine are also important for they serve to distinguish even more sharply, for the reader, their distinct personalities; and just as Isabella Thorpe is a foil for Catherine Morland, so Camilla Stanley functions in the same way with Catharine Percival. Mrs. Percival may also be considered -- to a limited extent -- as a foil for her niece when one recalls the exchange between them on the subject of Catharine's "criminal" admission of Edward's attentions. It has already been shown that Catharine is not consistently characterised; yet, as Bush has shown, she is, nevertheless, real: this is especially seen in her hopes of finding Camilla what she wishes her to be because of her own loneliness, and her inclination to like Edward because he has first been friendly to her. Like Catharine, Camilla is realistically drawn; unlike Catharine, however, she is consistently portrayed: the consistency and realism of Camilla's character is made evident when one considers her dialogue and conduct in the light of the background information given to one about her by the author. As for Mrs. Percival, she is likewise consistently and realistically depicted as a hypochondriac who worries as much about her own personal health as about the welfare of her country. She may also be seen as an early example of the many hypochondriacs who are destined to make their appearances in the author's later works. In "Catharine," Jane Austen seems, more then ever, to be using language as a means of character differentiation and revelation. And while Catharine may not be consistently portrayed, the author's use of dialogue and authorial description as a means of depicting Camilla and Mrs. Percival, and even Catharine on the whole, is quite well done. Thus, one may say with Bush that "Catharine" "shows how far, at sixteen, Jane Austen has progressed along her own path, and how far she has still to go" [3] respecting the use of an individual's chosen language as a means of character revelation.

Chapter 4: *Lady Susan*

Written in 1793-4, *Lady Susan* is an epistolary novella which concentrates on the exploits of a formidable character by the same name. In the story, Lady Susan Vernon schemes to marry her daughter, Frederica Vernon, to a fool, Sir James Martin. She herself plans to marry the man whom her daughter loves, Reginald De Courcy. But Lady Susan's designs fail: Reginald is destined, by his family, to a union with Frederica, and Lady Susan ends up marrying Sir James instead. Throughout *Lady Susan*, the protagonist tries to maintain an appearance of moral conduct before her host and hostess, Mr. and Mrs. Vernon, and her lover, Reginald. It is only in her letters to her confidante, Mrs. Johnson, that she dispenses with this virtuous front. Lady Susan and Mrs. Vernon are the two major correspondents in this novella. Its epistolary style, which allows them to reveal their most intimate thoughts on the moral and social issues of principle and conduct, facilitates the representation of their different personalities. In conjunction with my discussion of Mrs. Vernon, I shall also be speaking about Frederica Vernon.

One of the first things the reader will notice about Lady Susan is her duplicity. A. Walton Litz says that she possesses a "thoroughgoing *hypocrisy*" [1] -- and, indeed, she does. Lady Susan's hypocritical character is made most apparent when one juxtaposes her letters to Mr. Vernon and Reginald with those to her confidante, Mrs. Johnson; for while her letters to the two former personages present her in a moral light, those to the latter reveal her as an "unprincipled Woman" (255). Printed below are extracts from "Letter 1" (243-4) and "Letter 2d" (244-6); the first is from Lady Susan to her brother-in-law, Mr. Charles Vernon, and the second is from her to her intimate friend, Mrs. Alicia Johnson. Taken together, these two letters, which deal with the same circumstances, expose the double-faced nature of Jane Austen's protagonist.

My dear Brother

> I can no longer refuse myself the pleasure of profitting by your kind invitation when we last parted, of spending some weeks with you at Churchill, & therefore if quite convenient to you & Mrs Vernon to receive me at present, I shall hope within a few days to be introduced to a Sister whom I have so long desired to be acquainted with. My kind friends here are most affectionately urgent with me to prolong my stay, but their hospitable & chearful dispositions lead them too much into society for my present situation & state of mind; & I impatiently look forward to the hour when I shall be admitted into your delightful retirement. . . . I shall soon have occasion for all my fortitude, as I am on the point of separation from my own daughter. The long illness of her dear Father prevented my paying her that attention which Duty & affection equally dictated, . . . (234-4)

> You were mistaken my dear Alicia, in supposing me fixed at this place [Langford, the home of the Manwarings] for the rest of the winter. It greives me to say how greatly you were mistaken, . . . At present nothing goes smoothly. The Females of the Family are united against me. . . . My dear Creature, I have admitted no one's attentions but Manwaring's, [and] . . . Sir James Martin, on whom I bestowed a little notice in order to detach him from Miss Manwaring. But if the World could know my motive *there*, they would honour me. I have been called an unkind Mother, but it was the sacred impulse of maternal affection, it was the advantage of my Daughter that led me on; and if that Daughter were not the greatest simpleton on Earth, I might have been rewarded for my Exertions as I ought.--Sir James did make proposals to me for Frederica--but Frederica, who was born to be the torment of my life, chose to set herself . . . violently against the match, . . . The event of all this is very provoking. Sir James is gone, [Miss] Maria [Manwaring] highly incensed, and Mrs Manwaring insupportably jealous . . . & so enraged against me, . . . We are now in a sad state; no house was ever more altered; the whole family are at war, & Manwaring scarcely dares speak to me. It is time for me to be gone; I have therefore determined on leaving them, . . . I take Town in my way to that insupportable spot, a Country Village, for I am really going to Churchill. . . . it is my last resource. Were there another place in England open to me, I would prefer it. Charles Vernon is my aversion, & I am afraid of his wife. At Churchill however I must remain till I have something better in veiw. (244-6)

As one reads these letters, one begins to see just how admirably suited the epistolary style of *Lady Susan* is to the revelation of its protagonist's character. In "Letter 1" (243-4), Lady Susan writes in a manner becoming a lady of good breeding and social graces. Her first sentence here follows a pattern of highly conventional politeness: "*I can no longer refuse myself the pleasure* of profitting by *your kind invitation* when we last parted, of spending some weeks with you at Churchill, & therefore *if quite convenient to you & Mrs. Vernon to receive me at present, I shall hope* within a few days to be introduced to a Sister whom *I have so long desired to be acquainted with*" (243). I have italicised the parts of this sentence which I consider society talk. Lady Susan seems to gush with all the right words to say here. She apparently thinks that she knows just what to say in order to win over her relatives' hearts and procure an affectionate

welcome. [2] But Mrs. Vernon sees through Lady Susan; although she cannot account for her sister-in-law's desire to leave Langford for Churchill, she correctly conjectures that "such a visit is in all probability merely an affair of convenience" (246). And Lady Susan's sudden impatience to "be admitted into . . . [Mr. and Mrs. Vernon's] delightful retirement" (243) is, indeed, as the reader discovers in her letter to Mrs. Johnson, entirely a matter of convenience: "I am really going to Churchill. . . . it is my last resource. Were there another place in England open to me, I would prefer it. . . . At Churchill however I must remain till I have something better in veiw" (244). In "Letter 1" (243-4), Lady Susan had mentioned that "My kind friends here [at Langford] are most affectionately urgent with me to prolong my stay, but their hospitable & chearful dispositions lead them too much into society for my present situation & state of mind" (243). This information is, of course, quite untrue as one sees in "Letter 2d" (244-6); it has been fabricated only for the benefit of giving Mr. Vernon a plausible excuse for her unpredecented desire to leave Langford for Churchill. "Letter 2d" (244-6) also reveals Lady Susan's real attitude towards her daughter, Frederica. In "Letter 1" (243-4), she had spoken of her daughter in the affectionate tones of a doating mother (244); in "Letter 2d" (244-6), however, she tells Mrs. Johnson that Frederica "was born to be the torment of my life" (245). Lady Susan, then, is not above the telling of falsehoods in her bid to appear socially and morally acceptable to those around her -- that is, to all but Mrs. Johnson. (Lady Susan does not need to pretend to be anything other than herself with Mrs. Johnson because her confidante upholds the values and conduct of her ladyship.) Thus it is only in the comparison of Lady Susan's letters to Charles Vernon and Mrs. Johnson that one gets an initial idea of what the writer is really like.

I have already remarked on Lady Susan's hypocritical nature at the beginning of this discussion on her character. Litz writes in "The Land of Fiction: *Juvenilia* and *Lady Susan*," that "the term hypocrisy has, as one of its root meanings, 'the acting of a part on stage,' and Lady Susan's success is the direct result of her consummate talents as an actress." [3] It is, therefore, of interest to note that in "Letter 2d" (244-6), Lady Susan forgets herself so far as

to act out the part of a caring mother, even though she has no need to do so before the woman who later is to tell her that "You should think more of yourself, & less of your Daughter. She is not of a disposition to do you credit in the World" (295): "I have distinguished . . . Sir James Martin, on whom I bestowed a little notice in order to detach him from Miss Manwaring. But if the World could know my motive *there*, they would honour me. I have been called an unkind Mother, but it was the sacred impulse of maternal affection, it was the advantage of my Daughter that led me on" (244-5). In this instance, Lady Susan seems to have forgotten that she is no longer writing to Mr. Vernon and needing to appear virtuous before him. Her worlds of reality and pretence seem to have so fused together here that she actually uses social rhetoric (245) in this communication with Mrs. Johnson. No wonder the narrator comments at the end of *Lady Susan*: "Whether Lady Susan was, or was not happy in her second Choice [of husband]--I do not see how it can ever be ascertained--for who would take her assurance of it, on either side of the question? The World must judge from Probability" (313). The narrator's remarks reinforce one's suspicions that much of what Lady Susan says cannot be taken at face value. Thus, if one is to discover the truths or lies concealed in her words, one has to consider them carefully in the light of the situations and events to which they make reference. But there is one exception to this rule. One does not need to sieve through Lady Susan's letters to Mrs. Johnson for the truth because the former does not need to hide her true feelings from the latter. In "Letter 2d" (244-6), Lady Susan had temporarily forgotten that she was writing to Mrs. Johnson and attempts to justify her actions before her friend. But then she quickly remembers; and midway through her sentence on "the sacred impulse of maternal affection" (245), she reverts to her normal tone of confidence with Mrs. Johnson, and calls her daughter "the greatest simpleton on Earth" (245). She then goes on, in the intimacy of this (private) letter, to reveal that Frederica "was born to be the torment of my life" (245).

Lady Susan's hypocritical nature is not merely made clear in this juxtaposition of "Letter 1" (243-4) and "Letter 2d" (244-6); it is also evinced in a comparison of her dialogue with Mrs. Vernon in "Letter 20" (275-9) and her epistle to Mrs. Johnson numbered "Letter

22d" (280-3). It will already have been noticed from the ongoing discussion of Lady Susan that her ladyship is far from possessing the merits of a gentle heroine; rather, she has the characteristics of an anti-heroine. For Lady Susan shows herself to be totally intent on self gratification; a liar, a hypocrite, an adulteress and an unloving parent, she would sacrifice the happiness of all who might stand in her path. Lady Susan may, thus, be seen to play a dual role in this epistolary work: as the virtuous heroine, she must write and speak in a socially acceptable manner -- acceptable that is, to "the opinion of the World" (269); but, as an anti-heroic merry widow, she may remember "what is due to [herself]" (269), and in baring her soul (to her confidante), reveal herself to be "a very distinguished Flirt" possessed of "a degree of captivating Deceit" (248-9).

Since Lady Susan possesses the chameleon-like ability to conduct herself in a socially decorous manner even whilst seething within, the clues to her character must lie in her language, even when, as Babb points out, "the verbal surface is unruffled, or hardly ruffled." [4] In "Letter 20" (275-9), Mrs. Vernon remarks that though "Lady Susan behaved with great attention to her Visitor," Sir James Martin, "I thought I could perceive that she had no particular pleasure in seeing him" (276); yet Lady Susan's speech would seem to prove Mrs. Vernon's observations otherwise:

> Lady Susan . . . was anxious to speak with me [Mrs. Vernon] in private. . . . she said, "I was never more surprised in my life than by Sir James's arrival, & the suddenness of it requires some apology to *You* my dear Sister, tho' to *me* as a Mother, it is highly flattering. He is so warmly attached to my daughter that he could exist no longer without seeing her. Sir James is a young Man of an amiable disposition, & excellent character; a little too much of the *Rattle* perhaps, but a year or two will rectify *that*,& he is in other respects so very eligible a Match for Frederica that I have always observed his attachment with the greatest pleasure, . . . I have never before mentioned the likelihood of it's taking place to any one, because I thought that while Frederica continued at school, it had better not be known to exist; . . . I am sure my dear Sister, you will excuse my remaining silent on it so long, & agree with me that such circumstances, while they continue from any cause in suspense, cannot be too cautiously concealed. When you have the happiness of bestowing your sweet little Catherine some years hence on a Man, who in connection & character is alike unexceptionable, you will know what I feel now; tho' Thank Heaven! you cannot have all my reasons for rejoicing in such an Event. Catherine will be amply provided for, & not like my Frederica endebted to a fortunate Establishment for the comforts of Life." (276-7)

In this speech, Jane Austen is careful to record what Lionel Trilling might term Lady Susan's

"unuttered or unutterable expressions of value." [5] Thus, although her ladyship's words are spoken with "such earnestness, such solemnity of expression" (278), they yet betray her discomfort at Sir James' unexpected visit. As an individual who finds it inexcusable in those women "who forget what is due to themselves & the opinion of the World" (269), Lady Susan is anxious to maintain her facade of social propriety in the execution of her maternal duties. The author captures Lady Susan's unease in the circumstances through the use of italics in her speech. Lady Susan begins by emphasising her regard for Mrs. Vernon and the latter's feelings. She then goes on to stress her own emotions on Sir James' attachment to her daughter as a prelude to her reasons for encouraging his attentions to Frederica. However, perceptive woman as she is, Lady Susan knows that Mrs. Vernon will discover Sir James' limitations either sooner or later, and while acknowledging that he is "'a little too much of the *Rattle* perhaps'" (276), immediately justifies herself by saying that "'a year or two will rectify *that*'" (276-7). Lady Susan's need to explain her actions may be seen as an indication of her guilt with regard to her treatment of Frederica; it also reveals her nagging urge for consequence in the social circles important to her. Moreover, since she leads the double life of virtuous heroine and merry widow, she must constantly justify herself before all but her confidante in order to maintain conventional appearances. In her speech, Lady Susan proceeds to give an explanation of her concealment of Frederica's imminent union with Sir James. Then she quickly and easily moves into a call for Mrs. Vernon's identification with her by mentioning her sister-in-law's future "'happiness of bestowing your sweet little Catherine some years hence on a Man, who in connection & character is alike unexceptionable'" (277). Lady Susan then ends her speech with another reason for forwarding the match between Frederica and Sir James (277). But Lady Susan talks too well to engage the sympathy or empathy of her already estranged sister-in-law; instead, she arouses Mrs. Vernon's original suspicions concerning her: "She . . . talks very well, with a happy command of Language, which is too often used I beleive to make Black appear White" (251). Thus Mrs. Vernon "cannot help suspecting the truth of everything she said" (278) not because Lady Susan is embarrassed and confused in her speech, but ironically,

because she "'had the convenient talent of affecting sensations foreign to . . . [her] heart'" (277).

Mrs. Vernon's mistrust of Lady Susan is well grounded; for in the latter's epistle to Mrs. Johnson, she writes:

> This is insufferable! . . . I was never so enraged before, & must releive myself by writing to you, who I know will enter into all my feelings. Who should come on Tuesday but Sir James Martin? Guess my astonishment & vexation--for as you well know, I never wished him to be seen at Churchill. . . . I could have poisoned him; I made the best of it however, & told my story with great success to Mrs. Vernon. (280)

Lady Susan's letter to Mrs. Johnson does not contain the quiet dignity of expression and cautious propriety of tone found in her communications with Mrs. Vernon; instead it registers all her very human emotions -- "I could have poisoned him" -- and dismay upon her discovery of Sir James' arrival at the Vernon residence: "I never wished him to be seen at Churchill! What a pity that you should not have known his intentions!" (280) For with Mrs. Johnson, Lady Susan has no need to dissimulate; she may tell the truth with real spontaneity of feeling. Thus like the merry widow that she is, she can request that if Manwaring's wife "live with you [Mrs. Johnson], it may be in your power to hasten [her death]. The violence of her feelings, which must wear her out, may be easily kept in irritation. I rely on your friendship for this" (308).

But Lady Susan is not all bad, despite what Mrs. Vernon would have one believe. Although Jane Austen disapproves of Lady Susan's social conduct and moral attitudes, she is yet fair to her protagonist in that she reveals the other side of her anti-heroine's character. Lady Susan is, therefore, shown to be an optimist who is a clever woman possessed of acute perception; Litz says that she "is completely free of self-deception and illusion." [6] A severe mother, who basically wants her daughter to marry well as long as their love interests do not clash, she is yet capable of showing a real regard for those whom she respects; hence Lady Susan's affectionate understanding of her confidante's predicament if they "persist in the connection" (307): "My dear Alicia I yeild to the necessity which parts us. Under such circumstances you could not act otherwise. Our friendship cannot be impaired by it; & in

happier times, when your situation is as independant as mine, it will unite us again in the same Intimacy as ever. Fot this I shall impatiently wait" (307).

Lady Susan's "adversary," Mrs. Vernon, primarily functions as a foil for her sister-in-law. Their differences of personality are seen most clearly in their treatment of Frederica Vernon. In a letter to Lady De Courcy, Mrs. Vernon remarks that Lady Susan "has behaved with inattention if not unkindness to her own child" (247). Her observation is confirmed in Lady Susan's disregard for Frederica's feelings respecting the proposed union between Sir James Martin and her niece. When Frederica runs away from school because she is unhappy about the match between her and Sir James, Lady Susan reacts by telling Frederica that she is "absolutely determined on her marrying him" (280). Lady Susan's motto of putting her own desires and feelings before those of all others is seen in her being "more particularly resolved on the Match" despite Frederica's mention "of her misery" (280). In her egoism, Lady Susan even says that "I beleive I owe it to my Character to complete the match between my daughter & Sir James, after having so long intended it" (294). Mrs. Vernon's response to Frederica's attempt to run away, on the other hand, shows some understanding concerning her niece's conduct even though she does not condone it: "Frederica must be as much as sixteen, & ought to know better, but from what her Mother insinuates I am afraid she is a perverse girl. She has been sadly neglected however, & her Mother ought to remember it" (266). Mrs. Vernon's understanding turns into pity for Frederica when she sees her:

> The poor girl looks so unhappy that my heart aches for her. Lady Susan is surely too severe, because Frederica does not seem to have the sort of temper to make severity necessary. She looks perfectly timid, dejected & penitent.
> Her mother has insinuated that her temper is untractable, but I never saw a face less indicative of any evil disposition than her's; & from what I now see of the behaviour of each to the other, the invariable severity of Lady Susan, & the silent dejection of Frederica, I am led to beleive as heretofore that the former has no real Love for her daughter & has never done her justice, or treated her affectionately. (270)

In this passage, Mrs. Vernon follows her own precedent of always providing a reason for her denouncement of Lady Susan; here it is Lady Susan's ill treatment of Frederica. In "Letter 24" (285-91), Lady Susan had called her daughter a "'Heroine in distress'" (290). This appellation brings to mind the conventional heroine of sensibility whose beautiful looks are indicative of

her virtuous character. In *Lady Susan*, Frederica is, indeed, the heroine in distress: she is not shown any maternal affection; in fact, she is being forced, by her mother, to marry someone she dislikes partly because Lady Susan has already engaged the affections of the man she loves. Although Mrs. Vernon does not know anything of Lady Susan's marital plans for Frederica at this moment, she seems to be thinking of her niece along the lines of the heroine of sensibility. She judges Frederica's disposition from the latter's looks -- "I never saw a face less indicative of any evil disposition than her's" -- and looks upon Lady Susan as the villainous parent of a romance novel who "has no real Love for her daughter & has never done her justice, or treated her affectionately" (270). Of course, in the context of *Lady Susan*, Lady Susan is a very real part of the characters' lives; and her unloving attitude towards Frederica is also shown to be a fact.

In "Letter 24" (285-91), Mrs. Vernon records, verbatim, a conversation that had taken place between her and Frederica.

> "My dear Aunt, said she, he is going, Mr De Courcy is going, & it is all my fault. I am afraid you will be angry, but indeed I had no idea it would end so."
>
> "My Love, replied I, do not think it necessary to apologize to me on that account. I shall feel myself under an obligation to anyone who is the means of sending my brother home; because, (recollecting myself) I know my Father wants very much to see him. But what is it that *you* have done to occasion all this?"
>
> She blushed deeply as she answered, "I was so unhappy about Sir James that I could not help--I have done something very wrong I know--but you have not an idea of the misery I have been in, & Mama had ordered me never to speak to you or my Uncle about it,--&--" "You therefore spoke to my Brother, to engage *his* interference;" said I, wishing to save her the explanation. "No--but I wrote to him. I did indeed. I got up this morning before it was light--I was two hours about it--& when my Letter was done, I thought I never should have courage to give it. After breakfast however, as I was going to my own room I met him in the passage, & then as I knew that everything must depend on that moment, I forced myself to give it. He was so good as to take it immediately; I dared not look at him--& ran away directly. I was in such a fright that I could hardly breathe. My dear Aunt, you do not know how miserable I have been."
>
> "Frederica, said I, you ought to have told *me* all you distresses. You would have found in me a friend always ready to assist you. Do you think that your Uncle & I should not have espoused your cause as warmly as my Brother?"
>
> "Indeed I did not doubt your goodness, said she, colouring again, but I thought that Mr De Courcy could do anything with my Mother; but I was mistaken; they have had a dreadful quarrel about it, & he is going. Mama will never forgive me, & I shall be worse off than ever." "No, you shall not, replied I.--In such a point as this, your Mother's prohibition ought not to have prevented your speaking to me on the subject. She has no right to make you unhappy, & she shall *not* do it. Your applying however to Reginald can be productive only of Good to all parties. I beleive

> it is best as it is. Depend upon it that you shall not be made unhappy any longer." (286-7)

When Mrs. Vernon first learned about Frederica's running away from school, she had shown understanding. When she first saw her niece, she had felt pity for the latter. In this dialogue between Mrs. Vernon and Frederica, one finds that the former's pity for the latter has since been replaced by a maternal love. Mrs. Vernon speaks with Frederica as most mothers would to their children. When Frederica says that she is afraid that she has angered her aunt, the latter tells her: "'My Love . . . do not think it necessary to apologize to me'" (286). Here Mrs. Vernon's immediate response is one of affection -- "'My Love'" -- followed by that of reassurance -- "'do not think it necessary to apologize to me'" (286). Like a caring mother, who listens intently to a child's confidence about his or her troubles, Mrs. Vernon pays much attention to what Frederica has to impart. Mrs. Vernon's "'You therefore spoke to my Brother, to engage *his* interference'" (286) shows that she has quickly grasped the matter of Frederica's divulgence; her wish "to save . . . [Frederica] the explanation" (286) reveals her kindliness towards her niece. But like the mother who is upset that her daughter should go to someone else with her troubles, rather than to herself, Mrs. Vernon also remarks: "'Frederica . . . you ought to have told *me* all your distresses. You would have found in me a friend always ready to assist you. Do you think that your Uncle & I should not have espoused your cause as warmly as my Brother?'" (286) Mrs. Vernon's emphasis on the first "'me'" reflects a hurt which is again expressed in the latter two sentences (286). Near the end of this dialogue, Mrs. Vernon tells Frederica that Lady Susan "'has no right to make you unhappy, & she shall *not* do it'" (287). Her stress of the word "'not'" (287) shows that she intends to stand guarantor to Frederica's happiness; this is confirmed in her last sentence (287). Mrs. Vernon's affection and care for Frederica is also evinced in the following sentence: "'Your applying however to Reginald can be productive only of Good to all parties'" (287). Here she alludes to her niece's anxiety about having made her angry and tries to quell it, once and for all, by assuring Frederica that what has been done "'can be productive only of Good to all Parties'" (287). Mrs. Vernon's conversation with Frederica, then, reveals her fondness for the girl; her attempts to put

Frederica at ease are evidence of her motherly concern for her niece.

In her introduction of this dialogue between her and Frederica, Mrs. Vernon writes that she "saw that . . . [Frederica] was crying" (285). An examination of Frederica's part in this exchange will show that she is still in the process of recovering from her bout of tears. Frederica begins the conversation by saying, "'My dear Aunt . . . he is going, Mr De Courcy is going, & it is all my fault'" (286). Except for "'My dear Aunt'" (286), the rest of the communication quoted above is really made up of complete shorter sentences. This has the effect of making the speech very choppy and, hence, suggestive of the girl's emotional state as she struggles to gain control over those remnant sobs. Frederica's distraught condition is also reflected in the style of her following speech: "'I was so unhappy about Sir James that I could not help--I have done something very wrong I know--but you have not an idea of the misery I have been in, & Mama had ordered me never to speak to you or my Uncle about it,--&--'" (286). Here Frederica's agitation, as she thinks about what has just recently passed, is evinced in the many dashes and broken sentences. One is told that Frederica "blushed deeply" (286) as she spoke; this reddening is another indication of her feelings of confusion and embarrassment. But Frederica grows more confident as she senses her aunt's affection for her during their interaction; towards the end of her narration concerning her actions, she speaks in a more coherent and flowing manner: "'After breakfast however, as I was going to my own room I met him in the passage, & then as I knew that everything must depend on that moment, I forced myself to give it. He was so good as to take it immediately'" (286). In my discussion of Sophia in "Love and Freindship," I spoke about Jane Austen's use of speech as a reflection of an individual's physical and emotional states. In this exchange between Frederica and Mrs. Vernon, one sees another instance of the author's growing skill in using speech to indicate a character's emotional condition.

In *Lady Susan* as in "Catharine," Jane Austen has set up a foil for her protagonist: Catherine Vernon is what Lady Susan is not. Their differences of character are most clearly seen in their individual stands on the social issues of marriage and love: Mrs. Vernon clearly

disapproves of Lady Susan's scheme to marry Frederica to a man whom the girl cannot and does not love, while Lady Susan simply looks upon the loveless match as an advantageous arrangement necessary to her daughter's economic welfare. Lady Susan's and Mrs. Vernon's distinct qualities of personality are also reflected in their letters and their speeches. A comparison of Lady Susan's "Letter 1" (234-4) to Mr. Vernon and "Letter 2d" (244-6) to Mrs. Johnson will reveal her to be a double-faced individual intent on self-gratification. Her words with Mrs. Vernon (276-7) also show her to be a social chameleon capable of putting on a facade and hiding her true feelings. Unlike Lady Susan, Mrs. Vernon is not egotistical. An examination of her interaction with Frederica (286-7) will show her to be a caring person and, one might add, a champion for her badly treated niece. Frederica Vernon is an interesting figure. Her dialogue with Mrs. Vernon reveals her to be a shy girl in need of self-confidence; yet she possesses the spirit to run away or "fight"[1] for her human rights. In her determination to "work for my bread rather than marry" Sir James because "I always thought him silly & impertinent & disagreable" (279), she displays a courage which is founded on a naturally strong character. Frederica plays an important role in *Lady Susan*. Her interaction with her mother and her aunt and their different responses to her are crucial to the revelation of their personalities. In *Lady Susan*, Jane Austen displays a mastery in the depiction of her characters which is not found in her most advanced piece of juvenile work -- "Catharine." In "Catharine," one sees that the author is still feeling her way in her portrayal of the protagonist: Catharine, though for the most part sensible and believable, displays a sensibility over Edward which is uncharacteristic of her. "Catharine" had been composed in 1792. By 1793-4, however, Austen seems to have become more proficient in her handling of characters; this is evinced in her realistic and consistent characterisation of Lady Susan, Mrs. Vernon and Frederica in *Lady Susan*.

Conclusion

Alistair M. Duckworth says in "Prospects and Retrospects" that "Jane Austen is among the most linguistically self-conscious of authors." [1] This means that Jane Austen was as concerned about the language of her narrative as that of her characters. In her letters to Anna Austen, the author had often commented on her niece's characterisation of personages in the latter's writings. One of these comments reads, "you must not let her act inconsistently." [2] Jane Austen's attention to the consistent characterisation of her personages is evinced in her handling of their chosen language. Her characters often speak or write in ways that reveal their personalities.

In *Jane Austen: Facts and Problems*, R. W. Chapman remarks that "the subject of her art is not individuals but their interaction." [3] Chapman has a point here. While I believe that the individual characters in Jane Austen's works are important, it is their interaction with one another that makes them come alive. The author's awareness of the importance of interaction as a contribution to character creation, development and revelation is seen as early as 1787, when she probably composed "Frederic & Elfrida." Here, as in her later pieces of early work, one sees the author experimenting with a character's chosen language as a means of characterisation.

Jane Austen's apprentice work from 1787 to 1794 often shows her grappling with the difficulties of having a character speak or write in such a way as would reflect that individual's personality. As late as 1792, in "Lesley Castle" and "Catharine," one finds that the author has still to hone her skills at character representation: Charlotte Lutterell and Catharine Percival are not consistently characterised; their letters and dialogue are not in keeping with their general characters. However Jane Austen's difficulties with Charlotte and Catharine are exceptions rather than norms. In the epistolary "The Three Sisters," she effectively uses Mary's, Sophia's and Georgiana's language to reveal them as they are. And in "Catharine," Camilla's speech is also used to reflect and reveal her personality. Thus it is not surprising that by 1794, in *Lady Susan*, Jane Austen should have produced a story in which the characters are consistently

characterised through their chosen language. Here the author seems to have achieved her goal of making her characters act consistently. Here she has fulfilled her objective of making them reveal themselves through their language -- and without the intervention of authorial description until the last "chapter," entitled "Conclusion" (311-3).

Notes

Introduction

1 In the interest of making some distinction between the uses of the word "character" as it refers to a figure and as it refers to that figure's nature, I have sometimes used the word "personage" in place of the more commonly used "character" to denote an individual.

2 Rachel Trickett, "Jane Austen's Comedy and the Nineteenth Century," *Critical Essays on Jane Austen*, ed. B. C. Southam (London, 1968), p. 165.

3 Trickett, "Comedy," p. 165.

4 Howard S. Babb, *Jane Austen's Novels: The Fabric of Dialogue* (Columbus, 1962), p. 81.

Chapter 1: Shorter Pieces

1 J. E. Austen-Leigh, *A Memoir of Jane Austen* (London, 1870), p. 59.

2 Richard Whately, "Modern Novels," *Discussions of Jane Austen*, ed. William Heath (Boston, 1961), p. 12.

3 Austen-Leigh, *Memoir*, p. 200.

4 Jane Austen, "Frederic & Elfrida," *Minor Works*, ed. R. W. Chapman, rev. B. C. Southam (Oxford, 1969), VI, 7. All future citations from the *Minor Works* will be taken from this edition; page numbers will be enclosed within parentheses and inserted in the text.

5 Brian Charles Southam, *Jane Austen's Literary Manuscripts* (London, 1964), p. 7.

6 Rebecca is introduced amidst "festoons of artificial flowers" (6); this points to her love for ornament and physical beauty.

7 Whately, "Modern Novels," p. 12.

8 Southam, *Manuscripts*, p. 34.

9 D. W. Harding, "Character and Caricature in Jane Austen," *Critical Essays on Jane Austen*, ed. B. C. Southam (London, 1968), p. 86.

10 Harding, "Character and Caricature," p. 99.

Chapter 2: "Love and Freindship"

1 In "Letter the 14th" (101-6), Laura hears Sir Edward snoring and judges him to be "'an illiterate villain'" (103). She also thinks that he has "'a total Want of delicate refinement'" (103). Thus, it would seem that anyone, not possessed of the kind of "Feelings & Refinement" (104) which Laura has, is a villain -- and, hence, uncivilized.

2 Alistair M. Duckworth, "Prospects and Retrospects," *Jane Austen Today*, ed. Joel Weinsheimer (Athens, 1975), p. 12.

Chapter 3: "Catharine or the Bower"

1 Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford, 1923), V, 112.

2 Douglas Bush, *Jane Austen* (New York, 1975), p. 53.

3 Bush, *Jane Austen*, p.53.

Chapter 4: *Lady Susan*

1 A. Walton Litz, *Jane Austen: A Study of her Artistic Development* (New York, 1965), p.41.

2 I make a qualification to my statement here. Lady Susan fails to engage her sister-in-law's attachment because of the latter's perception and "resentful heart" (251-2); however, for much of the novella, she imposes on the hearts and minds of Reginald and Mr. Vernon because she "talks very well, with a happy command of Language, which is too often used . . . to make Black appear White" (251).

3 Litz, *Artistic Development*, p. 42.

4 Howard S. Babb, *Jane Austen's Novels: The Fabric of Dialogue* (Columbus, 1962), p.28.

5 Babb, *Dialogue*, p. 5.

6 Litz, *Artistic Development*, p. 41.

Conclusion

1 Alistair M. Duckworth, "Prospects and Retrospects," *Jane Austen Today*, ed. Joel Weinsheimer (Athens, 1975), p. 5.

2 Jane Austen, *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford, 1932), II, 400.

3 Robert William Chapman, *Jane Austen: Facts and Problems* (Oxford, 1948), p. 151.

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